

SALTY JAZZ:

WORKPLACE DISCIPLESHIP & PASTORAL CARE FOR MUSICAL ARTISTS

A THESIS-PROJECT

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GINA R. CASEY

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*Lord, I will lift my eyes to the hills  
Knowing my help is coming from You!  
Your peace You give me in time of the storm.  
You are the source of my strength  
You are the strength of my life  
I lift my hands in total praise to You.  
Amen.*

—Richard Smallwood, “Total Praise”

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis-project is to identify and create resources for Christian music artists that will help them incorporate the principles of faith as they work in the secular music industry. The church is challenged to embrace its biblical responsibility to provide discipleship and pastoral care to its music artists. The results will be useful in developing within Christian music artists a strong workplace theology, business ethic, servant leadership style, and a “salty” witness for their workplaces. In addition, the church will be strengthened because, through relevant teaching and spiritual nurturing, its relationship with its music artists will improve.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE VULNERABLE CHRISTIAN MUSIC ARTIST

### **Introduction**

Christian music professionals who perform in the secular music industry often find themselves just as susceptible to the trappings and stumbling blocks of celebrity and vocation as their counterparts in the US media and entertainment (M&E) industry (of which its top two business sectors include music and film), and the professional and Olympic sports industries. Consequently, four challenges faced by music artists, as well as actors, professional sports figures, and Olympic athletes, include: 1) income and money management problems, 2) addictive behavior and unhealthy habits, 3) failed marriages and broken relationships, and 4) an unnourished spiritual heart.

Successful navigation through these difficulties requires being part of a nurturing church that has embraced its biblical call to discipleship and a robust theology of work. Immersion in a spiritual environment of training and nurturing can help safeguard believing music artists from the dangers listed above, and empower them to be “salty” Christian witnesses in their workplaces. The failure, however, of the church to live up to its responsibility in these areas has left many of our music professionals spiritually unprotected and, consequently, vulnerable to the threats and temptations typified by the music industry.

Our goal is to explore the depth and pervasiveness of the first three problems listed above as they relate to all artists in the secular music industry, and the fourth problem from the perspective of the relationship of Christian music artists to the church.

Jazz music, one of the most ethnically diverse of any musical art form, will be the genre through which the music world at large will be represented. It will also be used as a metaphor to illustrate specific elements of life and faith. We will conclude with recommended solutions of support through the establishment of church and parachurch ministries that will be designed specifically to meet the unique spiritual and holistic needs of Christian music artists.

### **Jazz Music**

One of the greatest gifts given by God to the world is music. Its essence is a reflection of God's appreciation for beauty. Music exemplifies work as a God-given outlet for beauty and creativity in terms of labor (e.g., music performer, composer, lyricist, arranger, producer, etc.) and product (e.g., song, score, album, etc.). "Perhaps no form of human endeavor is more universal, yet more varied, than music making, and all of it derives from God's own love of music."<sup>1</sup> Music has the power to evoke the gamut of emotions – from frenzy to fear, bliss to the blues, delight to displeasure, worship to wariness, inspiration to ennui. It can lift our spirits, soothe our fears, enable our celebrations, or pump us up for a fight. In the Bible, when King Saul was feeling tormented and depressed, it was the mellow music of David's harp that calmed him down (1 Samuel 16:23).

With varieties in genre, vocal styling, types of instruments, production, arrangement, voicing, tempo, rhythm, movement, emphasis, and application, music has

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<sup>1</sup> "God's Glory in All of Creation: Psalm 149," Theology of Work Project, Inc., accessed October 30, 2014, <https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/psalms-and-work/book-5-psalms-107150/gods-glory-in-all-of-creation-psalm-146-150/psalm-149/>.

something for every taste and aesthetic. Cultures, eras, and social movements have been defined and distinguished by the music they produced or embraced. The Swing Era is the jazz genre associated with the 1930s and 1940s. This was followed by both the rock and roll wave and the rhythm and blues era of the 1950s. Disco music's distinct, danceable sound defines the mid-1970s, and the Grunge Era originated in Seattle during the 1990s. Chuck Brown was the godfather of Go-Go music, which is regionally connected to Washington, D.C., and the home of bluegrass music is the Appalachian Mountains. Twenty-first century music might become defined by indie groups known for intermingling styles like *Animus Rexx* (self-described on Twitter as “Soul/Rock/Electro/Blues. in a blender. with hot sauce. and bourbon”). While all of this is merely a brief snapshot of music in the United States, the gift of music is a universally popular, pleasurable, and profitable pastime.

Jazz has been nicknamed America's classical music. Born out of the African American's struggle for freedom, autonomy, and need to improvise, jazz's multitudinous roots – comprised of African, African-American, European, and Caribbean strands – sprung up in New Orleans at the end of the nineteenth century. “This cultural gumbo would serve as breeding ground for many of the great hybrid musics of modern times.”<sup>2</sup> From bebop to hip hop and from rock to rap, jazz has influenced – or “salted” – numerous music genres.<sup>3</sup> It had the power to blur racial lines and became the agency through which “blacks and whites were coming together in the same room to play and

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<sup>2</sup> Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Gioia, *The History of Jazz*, 8.

listen to jazz, oftentimes as equals!”<sup>4</sup> As it spread throughout the country, it evolved and morphed, and took on a unique stylization in major cities, like Chicago, New York, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Kansas.<sup>5</sup> In each location, however, the elements of jazz – its rhythmic richness, vitality, and syncopation; its improvisational creativity and freedom; its simple and complex chord progressions; and its call-and-response instrumental interplay – remained immutable. Dixieland, swing, bebop, Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, and acid jazz are some of its subgenres.<sup>6</sup> A few of the early pioneers include Charles “Buddy” Bolden (considered by most historians to be the first jazz musician<sup>7</sup>), Scott Joplin, Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington, Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong, Earl “Fatha” Hines, William James “Count” Basie, and Thomas Wright “Fats” Waller. They all had a creative and skillful hand in laying the foundation for the appreciation and performance of jazz music, which would extend beyond the national borders to the four corners of the world.

These jazz greats and so many others who continue to make and influence the world of music – the writers, lyricists, arrangers, producers, audio engineers, instrumentalists, singers, and performers – are graced with an extraordinary measure of creativity that boggles the mind of those more musically passionate than proficient. In the same way Olympiads honor the skills and talents of professional athletes from other countries (and vice versa), the great jazz and music festivals honor musical cohorts and aficionados regardless of race, nationality, or gender, and appreciate those who are

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Gelinas, *Finding the Groove: Composing a Jazz-Shaped Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Ian McNulty, “First Notes: New Orleans and the Early Roots of Jazz,” *FrenchQuarter.com*, accessed September 7, 2015, <http://www.frenchquarter.com/jazzmasters/>.

<sup>6</sup> “Jazz Music,” *Audials*, accessed June 24, 2014, [http://audials.com/en/genres/jazz\\_music.html](http://audials.com/en/genres/jazz_music.html).

<sup>7</sup> Gelinas, *Finding the Groove*, 179-180.

masters at the craft of music. It is no surprise that, more than almost any other event, live music festivals stand out as having the power to draw diverse crowds of nearly a million.<sup>8</sup>

What is also remarkable is that, irrespective of the well-documented problems regarding the dark side of the music industry and the statistics reporting the market as over-saturated with unemployed musicians, there are – and will always be – so many creative musical hopefuls continuing to strive for artistic success and to make a name for themselves. Evidently, the love of music can be an incredibly powerful and mystical motivator – maybe even blindingly so. Over time, unfortunately, many will come to face the fact that they will have to pursue their dream of a career in music in their off hours, after a full-time job necessary for basic subsistence. Nevertheless, there will always be countless aspirants determined to tough it out and continue to strive for commercial success, fame, and fortune in an industry where producers tend to profit and artists tend to be exploited. Awakening to the difficulties, frustrations, and seemingly endless struggles of such an ambitious career choice often becomes intensely unsettling and depressing.

### **Music Industry: Challenges and Enticements**

Indeed, the perks of being a successful music artist can be quite attractive: national and international travel; popularity with fans, supporters, and roadies; opportunities to collaborate with talented colleagues and icons; getting paid for creative expression; and receiving immediate gratification for work. A few less commonly noted physiological strengths and sociological benefits include:

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<sup>8</sup> Wiki Festivals, “List of International Music Festivals by Attendance,” accessed March 4, 2016, <http://www.wikifestivals.com/wiki/list-international-music-festivals-attendance>.

- keen hand-eye coordination
- exceptional short-term, visual, and working memory
- excellent phonological awareness (detection of pitch)
- quick reaction time
- being a “team player”
- sociability<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, being a music professional does have its disadvantages and challenges, as well.

### Income and Money Management Problems

Regardless of musical genre, choosing to become a professional musician – where performance is one’s chief source of income – usually means choosing a very stressful lifestyle. Many do not enjoy a consistent source or steady stream of income, so hustling for gigs can turn out to be a way of life for many years. There is a joke that reflects the financial challenges faced by musicians: Question– how does a jazz musician become a millionaire? Answer– by starting out as a billionaire. Trying to make a viable living with stagnating and fluctuating income becomes very problematic. Two of the music artists interviewed for this paper expressed frustration over the fact that they are in an industry where there are “no guarantees.” They stated that as independent musicians, they all too frequently have to deal with the cancellation of gigs they have been booked for, often after having cleared their calendars or turned down other job opportunities in order to accommodate them. The majority of these gigs are accepted solely on good faith and, as a result, musicians and singers are left completely vulnerable and without legal recourse. This “business model” has caused our interviewees to constantly struggle with feelings of

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<sup>9</sup> Abhil Jolly, “The Perks of Being a Musician: Brain Function and Music Education,” August 30, 2012, *Lessonface*, last modified September 6, 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, <https://www.lessonface.com/benefits-of-music-lessons>.

“pessimism” and “distrust”, and the inability to make concrete plans for the future. An accompaniment to this unpredictable state of financial flux is the looming fear of poverty. And this fear is not unfounded. Last year, for instance, Austin, Texas published data from the first comprehensive census of its local music industry. It revealed that over 20 percent of its music artists live below the federal poverty level. And the study showed that this issue has had negative economic consequences to music tourism, which normally adds annual revenues of hundreds of millions of dollars to Austin’s treasury.<sup>10</sup> Many artists and songwriters who are fortunate enough to be receiving royalties hardly make anything these days. Erik Sherman, writer for CBS News’ *Money Watch*, reported that in 2014, music written by Bette Midler streamed on Pandora 4,175,149 times in three months, and made her a whopping \$114.11.<sup>11</sup> Due to advances in technology, modern listeners – who used to purchase an entire album on CD for \$17 just to get one song – can now buy a single for less than a dollar, on average. On iTunes, individual songs are variably priced at \$1.29, \$0.99, and \$0.69, and Apple’s profit per download is 33%, while the artist winds up with only about 10 percent. These are just a few examples of how difficult it is for artists to make a living as a recording artist, performer, or writer in the music industry. Yet, on a positive note, even though the digital era has had its impact on record sales, there is still growth and opportunity for performers in the live concert sector.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Titan Music Group, LLC, “The Austin Music Census: A Data Driven Assessment of Austin’s Commercial Music Economy,” published June 1, 2015, accessed December 19. 2015, [http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Austin\\_Music\\_Census\\_Interactive\\_PDF\\_53115.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Austin_Music_Census_Interactive_PDF_53115.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Erik Sherman, “Musicians: Streaming will sweep us into poverty,” *CBS Money Watch*, July 23, 2014, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/musicians-say-music-streaming-leaves-them-broke/>.

<sup>12</sup> Luiz Augusto Buff, “The Music Industry in 2011,” *Music Business Journal*, Berklee College of Music (February 2011): accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.thembj.org/2011/02/the-music-industry-in-2011/>.

To be sure, there are music artists that do very well and are fully able to enjoy the pleasures of fame and fortune. For those experiencing even a modicum of financial stability, it is vital that they exercise wisdom and seek the counsel of professional advisors in managing their money. Considering the statement above that there are “no guarantees”, indie (i.e. independent) artists, in particular, need to be disciplined in budgeting and saving in order to survive during the lean times. The truth of the matter is, even successful musicians and singers have money struggles. So, to stay motivated toward financial prudence, music artists should keep in the forefront of their minds the bankruptcies of performers like MC Hammer and Toni Braxton that have become legendary in pop culture.

Sexism is a very real issue that gets too little attention and affects the bottom line for women in the music industry. There is an enormous gender workplace imbalance on the executive, production, and engineering levels, with women holding less than 5% of these positions.<sup>13</sup> With the exception of salary amounts, Berklee College of Music magazine *The Business Music Journal* cites little difference between the U.S. and the UK, where

...[w]omen working in the business are more inclined to have a superior qualification as compared to their male colleagues but nearly 50% of them earn less than £10,000 (\$15,000)...Moreover, even though there are more women in the population than men in working age, 61% of music professionals in the U.K. are male. In sectors such as promotion, management, and live music, that number rises to 70%.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Steve Haruch, “Women Account for Less than 5 Percent of Producers and Engineers — but Maybe Not for Long,” *Nashville Scene*, October 5, 2015, accessed December 8, 2015, <http://www.nashvillesscene.com/nashville/women-account-for-less-than-5-percent-of-producers-and-engineers-andmdash-but-maybe-not-for-long/Content?oid=1597594>.

<sup>14</sup> Natasha Patel, “Gender in the Music Industry,” *Music Business Journal*, Berklee College of Music (October 2015): accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.thembj.org/2015/10/gender-inequality-in-the-music-industry/#sthash.BQGoeOur.dpuf>.

There is also a competitive element to a music career that presents yet another cause for income concern. While it is difficult to know exactly how many music artists are in the United States, it is no doubt that there are a lot of them. In 2010, the Census Bureau reported 182,000 musicians, singers, and related workers in the United States.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) has a current membership of over half a million songwriters, composers, and music publishers. So it is reasonable to assume that there is a lot of competition in the music industry. What is most disconcerting is the Bureau of Labor Statistics' May 2014 survey which reported relatively few music-related occupations in the US and offered the following dismal career prognosis:

There will be tough competition for jobs because of the large number of people who are interested in becoming musicians and singers. Many musicians and singers experience periods of unemployment, and there will likely be considerable competition for full-time positions. Musicians and singers with exceptional musical talent and dedication should have the best opportunities.<sup>16</sup>

### Addictive Behavior and Unhealthy Habits

Drug and alcohol abuse are two other issues that threaten and plague the music industry. Some artists fall into substance abuse as a way to cope with the pressures of the industry and life. Many of the jazz greats came up in a time where, in spite of their

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<sup>15</sup> US Census Bureau, "Table 616. Employed Civilians by Occupation, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2010," *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012*, accessed November 15, 2015, [https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/musician\\_employment.pdf](https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/musician_employment.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Sara Royster, "Careers for Music Lovers," *United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics*, February 2015, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/article/careers-for-music-lovers.htm>.

musical genius, they faced a racist culture that tried to limit them in terms of creative expression and opportunity. In a conversation with rapper Melle Mel, world-renown music producer Quincy Jones cautioned him with stories about “Charlie Parker and the jazz guys he’d grown up with, and how society refused to accept them when they did bebop, so they ended up doing drugs and dying.”<sup>17</sup> Melle Mel did not heed Jones’ advice and fell hard into drugs. “I thought drugs came with the territory. It’s like you test your greatness against the odds to see which man falls and rises at the end. Everybody I knew, all the stars, were getting high on coke and crack. It was easy. Meanwhile, the opportunities slipped away.”<sup>18</sup> The devastating effect of substance abuse on professional music artists is portrayed as a subplot in the hit movie, *Dreamgirls*. Based on the Motown era of music, the fictional character Jimmy “Thunder” Early, expertly played by Eddie Murphy, is an amalgamation of music legends James Brown, Jackie Wilson, Marvin Gaye, and David Ruffin – all of whom struggled with drug abuse. In one telling and gripping scene, Jimmy Early, a former R&B superstar, is pictured anesthetizing the painful decline of his music career with cocaine.

There are creative artists who engage in substance abuse as a means of stimulating, nurturing, or enhancing creativity; for others it may be a consequence of battling mental illness:

But there is a critical distinction separating artists who endure mental illness and create art from those who take drugs to create. The creative work of an artist who overcomes their mental illness—often by turning to art and literature to help them

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<sup>17</sup> Quincy Jones, *Q: The Autobiography of Quincy Jones* (New York: Crown, 2002), 4466, Kindle.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, *Q.*, 4445-4446.

cope—is an inspirational personal triumph. But the creative work of a person who induces mental imbalance pharmacologically is the product of a drug.<sup>19</sup>

Sadly, alcohol and drug abuse have become the primary and/or secondary causes of the untimely death for many famous talented musicians over the years, including the following artists, just to name a few:<sup>20</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age of death</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Cause of death</b>
Paul Chambers	33	Jazz	Bass	Alcohol/Heroin/TB
Bix Beiderbecke	28	Jazz/Dixieland	Cornet	Alcohol
Stacy Guess	34	Jazz/Neo-Swing	Trumpet	Heroin
Jimi Hendrix	27	Rock/Hard Blues	Guitar	Drugs
Billie Holiday	44	Jazz	Singer	Alcohol/Drugs
Whitney Houston	48	Pop	Singer	Cocaine/Drowning
Michael Jackson	50	Pop/Rock	Singer	Propofol/Benzos
Janis Joplin	27	Psychedelic Rock	Singer	Alcohol/Heroin
Bubber Miley	29	Jazz/Dixieland	Trumpet	Alcohol/TB
Keith Moon	32	Rock	Drums	Clomethiazole
Jim Morrison	27	Rock	Singer	Heroin
Fats Navarro	26	Jazz/Bebop	Trumpet	Heroin/TB
Charlie Parker	34	Jazz/Bebop	Alto Sax	Alcohol/Heroin
Elvis Presley	42	Rock and Roll	Singer	Drugs
David Ruffin	50	R&B	Singer	Cocaine
Ike Turner	76	R&B/Blues	Guitar	Cocaine
Sid Vicious	21	Punk Rock	Bass	Heroin
Dinah Washington	39	Jazz/Blues	Singer	Barbiturates
Amy Winehouse	27	Blue-eyed Soul	Singer	Alcohol

Substance abuse is not only prevalent in the music industry, but it can also lead to addiction and overdose – two problems historically exacerbated by the fact that many musicians have no medical insurance. A report done by FMC (Future of Music Coalition)

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<sup>19</sup> R. Douglas Fields, “Creativity, Madness and Drugs,” *Scientific American*, November 22, 2013, accessed December 29, 2015, <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/creativity-madness-and-drugs/>.

<sup>20</sup> List compiled from the following sources: Listverse, “Top 10 Jazz Artists Who Died Young,” July 8, 2009, accessed January 5, 2016, <http://listverse.com/2009/07/08/top-10-jazz-artists-who-died-young/>; Jazz at Lincoln Center, “Gone Too Soon: Seven Jazz Musicians Who Died Young,” *Jazz Blog*, April 21, 2015, accessed January 2, 2016, <http://www.jazz.org/blog/gone-too-soon-seven-jazz-musicians-who-died-young/>; “Drug-Related Deaths - Notable Celebrities.” *Drugs.com*, last modified March 1, 2016, accessed March 4, 2016, [http://www.drugs.com/celebrity\\_deaths.html](http://www.drugs.com/celebrity_deaths.html).

in August 2002 found that 44 percent of musicians surveyed were without health insurance. This report also noted that the more time spent as a musician lessened the likelihood of being insured.<sup>21</sup> Fortunately these numbers may change due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). At the time of our interview, one music artist had not undergone an annual physical exam or had a dental appointment in over ten years due to lack of insurance. Another artist participant also acknowledged having no insurance for himself or his family. Subsequent to their interviews, thankfully, both musicians have been able to get health and dental coverage with reasonable, income-based monthly premiums and low deductibles through the ACA. Hopefully, in the upcoming months and years, statistics will show that the ACA has had a positive impact improving the quality of health for music artists in America.

In addition to the ongoing exploitive sexualization of women in music videos and stage performances,<sup>22</sup> there are still aspiring hopefuls encountering the extremely demoralizing and misogynistic “casting couch” attitudes and actions of producers and executives. Last year, Lady Gaga revealed to Howard Stern that, at the age of 19, a record producer raped her.<sup>23</sup> During the recent 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy Awards, she spotlighted this type of abuse through an incredibly stirring vocal performance of “Til It Happens To You,” while dozens of sexual assault survivors stood together in solidarity around her piano, with outstretched arms bearing empowering words: “NOT YOUR FAULT”,

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<sup>21</sup> “Health Insurance and Musicians,” *Future of Music Coalition*, August 27, 2002, accessed March 10, 2015, <https://www.futureofmusic.org/article/research/health-insurance-and-musicians>.

<sup>22</sup> Charlandrea Pettis, “The Sexualization of Women in Music Videos,” *Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies*, October 7, 2013, accessed January 3, 2016, <https://wgss2230.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/the-sexualization-of-women-in-music-videos-charlandrea-pettis/>.

<sup>23</sup> “Lady Gaga Reveals Rape to Howard Stern (Audio Clip),” *YouTube*, aired December 02, 2014, accessed February 28, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPWk7ud1Ng4>.

“UNBREAKABLE”, “NOT ALONE”, and “SURVIVOR”.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Lady Gaga’s interviews and the visual of powerful performances like this will incite female artists to unite in both fighting off the sexual predators and holding the entertainment industry accountable for this habitual and horrible treatment of women. Women deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and afforded opportunities to participate and be viewed as equals in all levels of the music workplace.

#### Failed Marriages and Broken Relationships

Life on the road – while perceived as attractive and glamorous to onlookers – has its challenges, too. Countless hours spent on buses and in vans, being transported from one concert venue to another, becomes confining and causes physical discomfort, even in the most luxurious of mobile transportation vehicles. In addition to this, and perhaps more importantly, the amount of time spent away from home and a ubiquitous road culture of promiscuity and substance abuse all serve to make it difficult for touring music artists to maintain a healthy love relationship, marriage, and family life. According to one young interviewee, all of these factors played a role in the recent breakup of his marriage. Another recently married musician recommended, as a part of this project, the development of lessons for musicians on “surviving the temptations of touring.”

Quincy Jones’ autobiography contains numerous accounts of himself and other musicians on the road hitting the “sin dens”<sup>25</sup> in places like Chicago, Norway, and Morocco. He chronicles dozens of trysts with women by name and location. “With three

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<sup>24</sup> ABC News, “Lady Gaga Oscar Performance, 2016 ‘Til It Happens to You”, *YouTube*, February 29, 2016, accessed March 28, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66UG34J6Alw>.

<sup>25</sup> Jones, *Q.*, 1380, Kindle.

years of being on the road in the United States behind me, by the time we toured Europe in 1953, I felt pretty comfortable with women, having been trained by the best in the [music] business.”<sup>26</sup> Eleven years later, he was “...so confused and mixed up in relationships, [he] didn’t know what [he] felt anymore.”<sup>27</sup> Quincy has seven children by five women, three of whom he was once married to and, at the ripe old age of 83, is still a philanderer.

Jaco Pastorius was an extraordinary jazz musician whose incredible technique revolutionized the production and performance of electric bass playing. At the age of 21, this self-professed teetotaler began drinking while on a music tour.<sup>28</sup> Soon, his problems with alcohol and cocaine would be exacerbated by a manic-depressive condition coupled with a chemical imbalance. His behavior became increasingly erratic, negatively affecting his playing as well as contributing to two failed marriages and broken family relationships. He died tragically just weeks before his 36<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The general consensus among our interviewees is that life on the road is paradoxical: it can be extremely exciting and extremely lonely – almost depressingly so – at the same time. The emotional and relational difficulties associated with this lifestyle could be contributing factors for music artists ranking fifth on the list of professions most likely to suffer from depression, according to a 2010 survey by Health.com.<sup>29</sup> A more

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<sup>26</sup> Jones, *Q.*, 2494, Kindle.

<sup>27</sup> Jones, *Q.*, 2499, Kindle.

<sup>28</sup> Bill Milkowski, *Jaco: The Extraordinary and Tragic Life of Jaco Pastorius* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 100.

<sup>29</sup> Tammy Worth, “Ten Careers with High Rates of Depression,” *Health Magazine*, 2016, Accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20428990,00.html>.

recent study by a musicians' charity in the UK produced the following statistics on the health and wellbeing of touring musicians:

- 67% said they had on occasion suffered depression or other psychological problems
- 75% said they had experienced performance anxiety
- 62% said they had experienced relationship difficulties
- 68% said they had experienced loneliness or separation from family and friends<sup>30</sup>

### **Christian Music Artists and the Church**

Besides all the problems listed above, added dimensions of vulnerability and challenge may be in store for Christians who choose to work as professional artists in the secular music industry – two problems center around their relationship to the church itself. The first is that, in many instances, the church has fallen short of its duty relative to discipleship and pastoral care for its music artists. The second relates to conflicting perspectives on work and faith and a consequent lack of any kind of theology of jazz. Left unaddressed and unresolved, these issues and conflicts will contribute to the risk of our music artists becoming too spiritually undernourished to be able to both withstand their myriad career-related challenges, and be effective workplace disciples in the music industry.

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<sup>30</sup> Nigel Hamilton, "Mental Health and the Music Industry," *Help Musicians UK*, October 9, 2015, accessed December 8, 2015, <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/news/blog/mental-health-and-the-music-industry>.

## Lack of Discipleship and Pastoral Care

Quincy Jones attended Baptist church services as a child with his mother (who was actually Christian Science) and grandmother.<sup>31</sup> Jaco Pastorius' upbringing in the Catholic Church clearly had an influence on his life.<sup>32</sup> (On more than one occasion he indicated that he wanted to be like Jesus.<sup>33</sup>) But childhood memories of church services and Bible stories alone are rarely sufficient to sustain one's spiritual heart. What if the church had been able to communicate to these two musicians Dr. Henry Blackaby's second reality of *Experiencing God* that the God to whom they were introduced as children was continuing to pursue a real and personal love relationship with them?<sup>34</sup> One can only imagine if the outcomes of their personal love relationships might have been different if these jazz music geniuses had experienced church discipleship that provided them with ongoing spiritual nurturing.

One of the church's primary responsibilities is to provide spiritual nourishment for its congregation – including the musicians and singers – in order that they can grow up in Christ Jesus. Miroslav Volf, professor of Systematic Theology at Yale Divinity School, explains the church's role in discipleship as "...build[ing] and strengthen[ing] mature communities of vision and character who celebrate faith as a way of life as they gather before God for worship and who, sent by God, live it out as they scatter to pursue

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<sup>31</sup> Jones, *Q.*, 571, Kindle.

<sup>32</sup> Milkowski, *Jaco*, 95.

<sup>33</sup> Milkowski, *Jaco*, 204.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Blackaby, *On Mission With God: Living God's Purpose for His Glory* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2002), 132.

various tasks in the world.”<sup>35</sup> Christian music artists need to be brought to ever-increasing levels of spiritual maturity through transformational teaching and preaching that is biblically sound and relevant to their lives. Learning scripture and how to connect it with the issues they face on a daily basis concerning things like relationships, finances, and work is an important objective of discipleship.

As we have seen, it is a really tough world out there for all music artists. Unfortunately, our interviews of music artists and pastors suggest that the church is failing to disciple Christian musicians in such a way that they are spiritually transforming and being empowered to resist the trappings and lifestyles commonly associated with their vocation. If this is so, then how will our professional musicians be able to survive and thrive unless they are regularly fed spiritually through sermons and teachings that inspire and encourage them to honor God with their lives? Spiritual nurturing lays the groundwork for Christians to live and work productively. But unless the church disciplines its musicians by scriptural precept and example, they cannot learn to view the issues of life and career through the eyes of faith and trust in the God for whom nothing is too hard or impossible.

Along with the need for spiritual food is the need for pastoral care (i.e. spiritual support and counseling). Comments from our music artist interviewees indicated a heartfelt desire and need to have supportive relationships with the church pastor and members, whether they themselves are members of that local church or not (see chapter four). Some of the participants had experienced church members who were unfriendly toward them and pastors who cared more about their musical presence than the state of

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<sup>35</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Christianity Today International Study Series: Engaging Culture* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 108.

their souls. While most of the ministers interviewed responded in the affirmative, there were a few who admitted that they do not provide pastoral care for their musicians – particularly if they were not members of their churches. And the questionnaire responses indicated a lack of intentionality when it came to openly showing encouragement and appreciation to the music staff. These musicians desperately want the church to reach out to them both in church and on the road – and keep them from falling through the cracks. What they are asking for is exactly what the apostle Paul asked of Christ-followers in Philippi.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose... Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (Philippians 2:1-2, 4 NLT)

How many pastors and worshippers are able to answer the following questions affirmatively?

- Do our words and actions show that we truly care about our music artists?
- Do we publically or privately affirm those in the music ministry?
- Do we regularly uphold our musicians in prayer?
- Do we formally commission them to exercise their musical talents “as unto the Lord”?
- Do we privately and caringly check on the state of the overall well-being of our musicians, at least once in a while?

The value of pastoral care and support ranked high among our participating music artists, so the church's response to this can really have an impact. Not only will it serve to spiritually nurture and strengthen our music artists, but it will also teach by example the

relationship building aspect of Christian discipleship and restore harmony between musicians and the church.

### Conflicting Beliefs on Work and Faith

Some pastors and congregations are of the opinion, either implied or articulated, that musicians and singers ought to (perhaps even with a biblical mandate) only exercise their gifts in direct service to the Lord in and through the church, not in other contexts and venues.<sup>36</sup> This is not a new thought. In his book, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts*, author and journalist Steven Turner states that Christians in the arts have long endured the criticisms of a church that believes that art, in any form, that is not done expressly for the church or fails to offer “an obviously spiritual conclusion” cannot be done to the glory and honor of God.<sup>37</sup> According to Jeremy Begbie, Duke Divinity School Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology and ordained minister of the Church of England, it was the medieval church that set the conditions for distinguishing between sacred (music for worship) and secular (“music to be listened to ‘for its own sake’”), which strongly influenced the formation of Christian thought about music.<sup>38</sup> The music artists interviewed for this thesis-project shared their own experience (or that of someone they knew personally) of having been directly challenged by a church that believed their God-given talents were only to be used in the church. One musician recalled being forced to make the decision whether to, in effect, pledge allegiance to that

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<sup>36</sup> P.J. Morton, *Why Can't I Sing About Love? – The Truth About the “Church” Against “Secular” Music* (Atlanta, GA: Namesake Publishing, 2009), 31-33.

<sup>37</sup> Steve Turner, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 46-47.

<sup>38</sup> Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 34.

way of thinking and taking the “church gig” or walking away. He chose the latter and, unfortunately, has not played for a church since. Grammy, Stellar, and Dove award-winning writer and producer PJ Morton is the son of Rev. Paul Morton, the presiding prelate of the Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship, International. In his book, *Why Can’t I Sing About Love?* he says, “I was told outright that I was wrong for doing ‘secular’ music.”<sup>39</sup>

There seems to be a double standard here. It would be an absurdity to think that God would mandate that engineers, lawyers, plumbers, beauticians, politicians, office managers, and dog trainers must be restricted and relegated to employment only in the local church. Huffington Post entertainment industry contributor and self-proclaimed Christian, Patrick Hess, shares the same concern:

So why is it so commonly accepted to have everyday workers in real world situations represent their faith whenever possible, but if a Christian chooses a career in the music industry, their music must be conforming to church praise and worship lyrical standards and style? In fact, why does music itself get singled out as the one area where judgment from other Christians becomes so commonplace and justified?<sup>40</sup>

The Bible calls the church to a robust theology of work (see chapter two). Briefly put, work is the means by which the creativity of God is extended through the creatures that bear God’s image. Among other things, theology of work emphasizes the Christian’s responsibility to exemplify character, commitment, and a spirit of cooperation, which are foundational for being both a good worker and a good witness in the workplace. The workplace affords the greatest opportunity for Christian influence and impact because it

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<sup>39</sup> Morton, *Why Can’t I Sing About Love?*, 26.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Hess, “Christians in the Music Industry,” *Huffington Post*, December 30, 2014, accessed January 21, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patrick-hess/christians-in-the-music-i\\_b\\_6069488.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patrick-hess/christians-in-the-music-i_b_6069488.html).

is where believers, side-by-side with non-believers, use their God-given talents and creative gifts to make a living each day.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated that his followers are to be “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13 NLT). Salt is an essential mineral that only impacts that upon which it physically comes into contact. Likewise, believers have been mandated to make an impact in the world through physical contact (Matthew 28:19-20). By means of a “salted” witness, Christian disciples enter into a divine partnership to reconcile the world to God. Spirituality at work is, therefore, demonstrated through the authentic embodiment of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, through which Christian workers can positively impact employee relations and influence workplace culture.

The workplace of a professional musician who is also a believer may or may not be the sanctuary, but it is definitely the shed (i.e. practice room), the schoolroom, the studio, and the stage. And that is a good thing. But if Christian music artists are limited or confined to performing only at churches, how then can the secular music world ever be “salted”?

Herein lies opportunity and responsibility – both of which rest at the foot of the altar. Instead of imposing legalistic restrictions upon Christian musicians in terms of venue and music genre, the church should wholly embrace them with unconditional love, be determined and intentional about helping them develop a sound theology of music, and then commission them to go out and influence their workplaces as agents of God and ambassadors for Christ. After commissioning them, the church should also continue to be the source of support, spiritual nourishment and pastoral care for them. Failure to do

these things will endanger the spiritual health and wellbeing of our fellow believers to whom God has entrusted special musical gifts to bless the church and impact the world. Failure to do these things could also serve to create a roadblock on the salvific pathway of others in the music industry who would be won to Christ by the word of their testimony.

The final issue we will present that also causes a widening of the gap between the church and its music artists is the belief that their musical talents should always be rendered to the church without remuneration. After interviewing clergy and church musicians around the country, Rev. Larry D. Ellis wrote an interesting article in 2014 entitled, “Should Our Church Musicians Be Paid?” He reported the following responses to his question:

“We are a small church with a limited budget. We cannot afford to pay anyone. What is done here must be by a volunteer. We do provide a great opportunity for those who would like to test their spiritual gifts in music.”

“Our theology of spiritual gifts brings us assurance that God provides us with all the [volunteer] resources needed to do all that he calls us to do as a church. Therefore, to go outside the church to hire someone to make this happen seems to contradict our theology of spiritual gifts.”

“We really like a full orchestra for the choir so we use prerecorded accompaniment tracks. We have invested a fortune in our great sound system.”

“Our church has a different emphasis, we concentrate on social ministries. Because we have significant paid staff in these ministries, we do not want to add paid musical staff to the church budget.”

“We do not want music prepared in advance. Everything we do is led by the Holy Spirit as he leads us.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Rev. Larry D. Ellis, “Should Our Church Musicians Be Paid?” *Religious Product News*, July 2014, accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.religiousproductnews.com/articles/2014-July/Feature-Articles/Should-Our-Church-Musicians-Be-Paid.htm>.

The statements above seem to overlook and underappreciate the value of a good music ministry in a church service. Music sets the tone for and throughout the service. It creates an indescribable atmosphere that invites worship, meditation, praise, and prayer, and spiritually prepares both clergy and congregation for sermon time. A proficient and attentive musician who is skilled at complementing and, even, punctuating great preaching is invaluable. A great example of this was observed two years ago by millions via television and Internet during the funeral service for state senator and senior pastor, Rev. C. Clementa Pinckney, who was one of nine victims fatally wounded during a shooting at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. As President Barack Obama was nearing the end of delivering the eulogy, he paused for a reflective moment, and then began to sing *Amazing Grace* in the musical style in which it is typically rendered in the African American church. Almost immediately, as if scripted, Emmanuel's organist, Charles Miller, chimed in, providing the perfect musical accompaniment, and the entire congregation joined. After the song ended, Mr. Miller continued to play softly, as if underscoring the president's final words, and on through the recessional. The television news reporters – and the world – seemed all to be in collective awe as they witnessed first-hand the “magic” that happens when the musician and the preacher are in harmony.

A good music ministry can draw people to a church service who might not otherwise be attracted by great preaching. There have been times on Sunday mornings at Columbus Avenue A.M.E. Zion church in Boston when the stained-glass windows would be open and the sounds of the choir and the instrumentalists would cause people walking by outside to come into the sanctuary. Good singing and musicianship can also help to

retain people at a church where the preaching is mediocre, at best. Church music has the capacity to touch and inspire everyone, from infants to octogenarians. For these reasons and more, skilled directors of music (DMs), musicians, and singers are invaluable.

The question of paying church musicians should really not be so polarizing since we learn from Scripture that David – who was not only king of Israel but also their chief musicologist – employed thousands of skilled music artists to sing and play in the temple. Luke 10:7b also reminds us that the one who works deserves to get paid. So at the very least, the church must come to a place of understanding and appreciating that what musicians do really *is* work, and then come together to affirm their gifts and calling. To do anything less, we run the risk of our music artists becoming frustrated and disenchanted with the church.

### **Summary**

The problem, in brief, is the vulnerability of our Christian music artists who perform secular music. Whatever the sources of this problem, it is a scandal to the Christian faith and the church, and a failure to live out the whole Gospel if our musicians are left to face a challenging and difficult world alone. What can we do to come alongside of them to provide support and guidance? How can we encourage them to use their gifts and calling outside the church as servants of God – and welcome and support their place and role within the local congregation in ways that value and strengthen them?

A failure to respond to this problem has dire consequences to our music artists. Unless the church provides teaching and discipleship, we risk them becoming spiritually undernourished and unable to resist the trappings of the music industry. We risk them

losing their “saltiness”, rendering ineffective their Christian witness and opportunity to transform their work culture. We risk their “light” dimming and no longer reflecting the nature of Christ within them. We risk them becoming irreversibly vulnerable to life of loneliness and depression and the lure of suicide. And we, the church, risk being held accountable to God for our failure to respond.

In the next chapter, we will discuss foundational biblical perspectives on work, music, and pastoral care. Then, in chapter three, we will explore resources that address the challenges and needs of Christian music artists, including parallel ministries to those with similar experiences in the M&E and sports industries. In chapter four, a model for a practical ministry to Christian music artists will be presented that is designed to make committed disciples who are no longer vulnerable, but spiritually equipped, encouraged, and educated, and then empowered to be, among other things, “salt” and “light” in their workplaces. And finally, in chapter five, we will present next steps to create paths that will broaden and extend this important work to our Christian music artists.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR ANOTHER WAY

#### **Introduction**

The first section of this chapter will present a theology of work with special emphasis on the general usefulness and beauty of work. Comments, illustrations, and jazz references will be interlaced within it to connect the subject matter directly to our music artists. This first section will conclude with a presentation of music in the Bible in order to affirm Christian artists in their vocational calling in music. The second and final section will offer a scripture supporting the position presented in chapter one that the church is responsible for the pastoral care and spiritual nurturing of its music artists.

#### **A Theology of Work**

##### In The Beginning

For all believers, including music artists, a theology of work begins in the first chapter of Genesis. In the beginning, God was busy at work, creating the universe. There was no edict, mandate, or coercion – God was working “for the sheer joy of it. Work could not have a more exalted inauguration.”<sup>1</sup> What we actually see here is God modeling work, not only as an individual, but as a collaborative partnership as well, because the Godhead was present at creation.<sup>2</sup> This dual work model would be

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York: Dutton, 2012), 34.

<sup>2</sup> In the first two chapters of Genesis, the word translated “God” is Elohim, which is plural; “Spirit” is the translation for “ruach”; and “Lord” is the translation for “Jehovah”. John 1:1, 2, 3, & 10 establish the presence and involvement of Jesus during creation. Finally, in Genesis 1:25, God said, “Let us make man after *our* image and likeness.”

transferred to God's first image-bearers who will, later, receive their work assignments both individually (e.g., Adam naming the animals) and as a team (e.g. "be fruitful and multiply").

As Creator, God made the world out of nothing. As Ruler, he brought order out of chaos so that what was created would thrive.<sup>3</sup> Later, humans would be created, reflecting God's image as creators ("reshap[ing] what exists into something genuinely new"),<sup>4</sup> and as rulers who are given stewardship over God's creation (Genesis 1:28). God built within human beings the capacity to continue the work he instituted at creation. In the words of Al Wolters, emeritus professor of religion at Redeemer University College in Ontario, Canada, "[As] God's representatives, [we] carry on where God left off."<sup>5</sup>

Creativity is the heart of good work. In Genesis 2, we see Adam respond to God's call commissioning him to work tending the garden and naming the animals. "God derived pleasure from Adam's creative acts."<sup>6</sup> While Adam was at work naming the animals, God took notice "to see what he would name them" (Genesis 2:19 NIV). On that sixth day, God reviewed and admired everything that was created, and declared the work – including the vocational stewardship He accorded to His image bearers – to be very good. So, creativity through good work is seen as divinely linked to being human. And, for the music artist, creativity is the heart of their work, which is making and performing good music.

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<sup>3</sup> Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 21.

<sup>4</sup> Crouch, *Culture Making*, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Albert N. Wolters, *Creation Regained: A Transforming View of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 36. Quoted in Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Steve Turner, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 66.

When God finished working, he modeled rest (Genesis 2:2-3), and would eventually instruct humans to do the same (Exodus 20:8-11). Ben Witherington says in his book, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, “It is perfectly clear that God’s good plan always included human beings working, or, more specifically, living in the constant cycle of work and rest.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Usefulness of Work

Creation was deemed very good because, as the product of God’s work, it was useful. Everything God made was purposefully designed. Genesis 1:2 says, “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep” (NKJV). To that which was unfinished, God gave significance and intent by “forming the formless into good shape,” “filling the void with good things,” and “illuminating what was in darkness.”<sup>8</sup> God’s work continued as he fashioned and designed the heavens and the earth, putting every sun, moon and planet in just the right spot, perfectly distanced and angled, for the purpose of creating an environment that was useful and suitable for the producing and sustaining of life. Then God’s work continued as he filled the world with humans, animals and plants – each embedded with its own unique usefulness and purpose in relation to itself and the world around it (e.g., the circle of life).

When God made humans in his image and likeness, he gave them work to do and told them to do it fruitfully – in other words, productively, effectively, purposefully, and usefully. God’s intention was for work to be meaningful and fulfilling for humankind, which can only happen when work is useful. Useless or futile work is like that which was

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. David Gill, “Workplace Theology – The Big Picture: Creation to Eschaton,” slide 6.

experienced in certain concentration camps during the Holocaust. The work required of the Jewish prisoners was to tear down walls they had just built up, and to fill holes they had just dug. The only purpose for this useless work was to break the spirit of the inmates.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, the Nazis were well aware that work helps to give purpose to life. And even though work is not *the* meaning of life, life is not very meaningful without meaningful work.<sup>10</sup>

### The Beauty of Work

Creation was declared to be very good, not just because of its usefulness, but also because of its beauty – the extreme pervasiveness of which is indicative of its importance to God. The beauty of God’s creative work is evident in all of nature – sunsets and sunrises, weeping willows and wisteria trees, beaches and bayous, spotted leopards and striped zebras, the moon and the stars, fall foliage in New England and the snow-capped Sierra Nevada Mountains – and appreciated by Christians and atheists alike.

When Eve was created and brought to Adam as his life partner, there must have been something about her that was beautiful and pleasing to Adam or he would not have been attracted to her, and vice versa. Later, in chapter three, Eve would find herself drawn to the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden because she saw that it was “pleasing to the eye” (Genesis 3:6). In fact, our ability to detect beauty was intentionally designed by our Creator. “Scientists tell us that the human eye is unique in creation for its ability to vividly sense color, texture, contrast, and motion. And we’re perfectly positioned on a

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Beyer, *Emmanuel Ringelblum: Historian of the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2001), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 40.

life-supporting planet in a unique place in the universe ideally situated for observing and marveling at the works of our creator (see Psalm 8:3 for how this causes us to humble ourselves and worship God). God has given us eyes to see, and lots to look at.”<sup>11</sup> And lots to sing about! The psalmist, David, would write the song lyrics, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1 NIV). Stuart K. Hine translated into English the German hymn, *How Great Thou Art*, which is a tribute to the splendor and wonder of God’s handiwork.

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

*When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.*

*Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

As we will see in more detail later, God’s love for beauty did not begin and end with creation. When the plans were given to Moses and David for building the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple, respectively, not only did God included construction specifics (e.g., height, width, depth, length, location of walls and doors, type of wood, etc.), but he also provided them with detailed descriptions for the aesthetics of these worship centers (e.g., color and quality of materials for curtains, orientation of furniture, decorative jewels and gems, etc.). So, these structures were actually designed by God to

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Jeff Myers, “The Aesthetic: Clues to God’s Design for Beauty,” *The Journal* 12, no. 7 (July 2012): 2, accessed February 27, 2016, [http://www.summit.org/media/journal/2012-07\\_Summit\\_Journal-WEB.pdf](http://www.summit.org/media/journal/2012-07_Summit_Journal-WEB.pdf).

be both useful and astoundingly beautiful. God's image-bearers today should strive for their work to possess these same elements, also. Perhaps answering these questions would be a good place to start:

- What is the place of beauty in your work?
- Would you or your organization or the people who make use of your work benefit if your work created more beauty?
- What does it even mean for work in your occupation to be beautiful?<sup>12</sup>

### The Ugliness of the Fall

In Genesis 2, we see God in a meaningful relationship with Adam and Eve. We mentioned earlier their response to the Creator's call to useful and beautiful work, and were given great creative freedom to do their jobs. But they were required to do so within a prescribed boundary – basically anywhere *except* the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Similarly, among members in a jazz ensemble, meaningful relationships are established. Each musician has a job to do in relation to the others. Likewise, the Christian music artist has also established a relationship with God, and members of the body of Christ, each of whom having been given a job to do in relation to one another (1 Corinthians 12:12-30). Collaborative musical interplay in jazz is termed “call-and-response,” which can occur instrument-to-instrument, vocalist-to-instrument(s), or vocalist-to-audience. (An example of the latter is in Cab Calloway’s famous song, *Minnie*

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<sup>12</sup> Theology of Work Project, Inc., “David’s Patronage of the Musical Arts (1 Chronicles 25),” *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, accessed January 5, 2016, <https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/samuel-kings-chronicles-and-work/the-golden-age-of-the-monarchy-2-samuel-1-24-1-kings-1-11-1-chronicles-21-2/davids-patronage-of-the-musical-arts-1-chronicles-25/>.

*the Moocher*, where the audience would repeat him scattering the syllables, “hi-de-hi-de-hi-de-ho”.) In terms of discipleship, call-and-response is a metaphor for listening out for and obediently responding to the call of God. It can also be applied to a respectful interaction between Christians. In jazz performance, there are “boundaries” inherent in each song (e.g., key, meter, notation, etc.); but within those boundaries is the freedom for individual creative musical improvisation. For the believer, improvisation can be a metaphor for negotiating the new sets of variables that each day presents<sup>13</sup> through the exercise of creative freedom within the boundaries of the “good and right standards of our God.”<sup>14</sup> Finally, every time a group of skilled musicians play jazz standards like “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” “Footprints,” or “Salt Peanuts,” they work collaboratively and creatively to “reshape what exists” into something new and beautiful, and pleasing to the ear. And when believing music artists support the work of the church with their talents, and the church supports their artists with love, sound teaching, and pastoral care, the music in the church – and even the culture of the music industry, as we know it – can be cultivated, reshaped into something new, and produce something that is beautiful and pleasing to the ear.

But if the instrumentalists disregard the score (which sets the musical constraints or boundaries), and individually decide to perform the song their own way (e.g., in different keys and different meters), a good musical work goes bad. And when temptation emerged in the midst of paradise,<sup>15</sup> Adam and Eve decided to misuse their freedom and

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<sup>13</sup> Wynton Marsalis, *Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life* (New York: Random House, 2008), 996, Kindle.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Gelinas, *Finding the Groove: Composing a Jazz-Shaped Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 35.

<sup>15</sup> Gill, slide #10.

disregarded God's boundaries. And then the good work went bad. "With a sudden jolt, the harmony of original Creation is torn with discord; a wild cacophony of sounds among which we can hear notes of anger, jealousy, pride, disobedience, murder, and the accompanying inner agonies of pain and shame and guilt."<sup>16</sup> Deciding to eat from the forbidden tree was effectively a decision to detach themselves from God and branch out on their own. Without God, however, they lacked the power to resist temptation fully. And this is why a broken relationship between the church and its musicians is tantamount to leaving them detached, vulnerable, and spiritually unequipped to face the tempter alone!

When Adam and Eve fell, brokenness and ugliness were introduced into the world. And work – which was originally intended to be a means of creative empowerment, expression and fulfillment – was now infected with the curse of futility, tediousness, and drudgery (Genesis 3). Work became a painful, thorny, and sweaty struggle, with its usefulness questioned and its beauty blurred. It would become viewed by humankind as a necessary evil and embraced with disdain. Solomon would write, "What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? ... What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind!" (Ecclesiastes 1:3, 13b NIV).

We saw a glimpse of how arduous and disappointing and unhealthy life can be for our music artists in chapter one: the toll that concert touring takes on their families and personal relationships, canceled gigs, and lack of spiritual discipleship. We can hear them crying out like Paul, "I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?" (Romans 7:24 MSG).

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<sup>16</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 32.

## The Hope of Redemption

If that is the real question, then the real answer is God can! God never leaves broken people or broken things without a remedy to fix the broken, heal the hurting, save the lost, free the bounded and addicted, restore the disintegrated, and to reconcile the alienated. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16a NKJV).” Jesus Christ became the promised “seed” (Genesis 3:15 NKJV) and the hope of glory for a fallen world. His good and useful and beautiful work “redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Galatians 3:13 NKJV). The word “redeem” in this context expresses the idea that “such deliverance involves cost of some kind, effort suffering, or loss to the one who effects the deliverance. It conveys the figure of a ransom.”<sup>17</sup> The price of that ransom was Jesus’ death and resurrection, through which there is now redemption and the forgiveness of sins, and all things are reconciled to himself (Colossians 1:14, 20). He repaired the broken relationship between God and humankind. And redemption also included the restoration of work to its original essence as a blessed and beneficent gift to all who are created in the image of God.

A theology of work becomes robust only when it is lived out in the life of the believer. The Apostle Paul understood and modeled this. He continued to support himself while in ministry by working as a tentmaker (1 Corinthians 9:11-18). He taught the early church, by example and precept, that a positive and dutiful outlook on work would honor and glorify God, as well as capture the attention of the unsaved. “Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the

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<sup>17</sup> Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader, Volume 1, Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 96.

Master you are serving is Christ” (Colossians 3:23-24 NLT). “Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 NLT).

That is why this project is so important! Christian music artists are often vulnerable, alone, alienated, addicted, unloved, and unappreciated. God wants to step into their lives, lovingly restore them (most often through the church), and then turn them into “salty” instruments of grace in the lives of their fellow musicians and associates. Then the light of Christ will shine through them, illuminating their good, useful, and beautiful creative work of music, and glorifying God in heaven.

### *Music Is Work*

The problem that arises between some music artists and churches when they have conflicting beliefs on work and faith was discussed in the previous chapter. Some churches feel that it is ungodly for Christian musicians to play anything other than church music. The other issue centers on the belief that church musicians should volunteer their time and talent more often than not. In this subsection, we will showcase music as it is portrayed in Scripture to provide support for it as a legitimate vocational calling highlighting its biblical origin and usage.

The Bible is replete with references to and illustrations of music and singing. In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, there was musical accompaniment (Job 38:4-7). Gabriel’s nocturnal announcement of the birth of Jesus to a group of lowly shepherds was punctuated by the praises of an army of angels (Luke 2:8-

14). And it was revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos that on the great and glorious day when the Lamb of God takes the scroll from the throne of God in heaven, the redeemed will respond by playing instruments and singing a new song, and then they will join the angels in a chorus of praise to the Lord (Revelation 5).

There is a school of thought that erroneously ascribes the first musical directorship of the hosts of heaven to Lucifer.<sup>18</sup> This belief is based solely on four verses in Ezekiel that several scholars believe describe Satan and identify him as the true king of Tyre.

“You were the seal of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.  
You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
Every precious stone was your covering:  
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,  
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,  
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.  
**The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes  
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.**  
You were the anointed cherub who covers;  
I established you;  
You were on the holy mountain of God;  
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.  
You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,  
Till iniquity was found in you.” (Ezekiel 28:12b-15 NKJV, emphasis mine)

The problem is that the aforementioned interpretation is founded upon a mistranslation of the bolded sentence above. The phrase “your timbrels and pipes” [גָּמְטָרִים וְנֶגְדִּים] is actually a technical term in Hebrew for the work that jewelers of that day performed in setting gemstones into sockets and grooves.<sup>19</sup> The NRSV translation – “your settings and your

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<sup>18</sup> Connie Ruth Christiansen, “Satan as the Original Worship Leader,” *ShareFaith, Inc.*, accessed October 11, 2015, <http://www.sharefaith.com/guide/Christian-Music/praise-and-worship/sastan-as-the-original-worship-leader.html>; David Reagan, “Satan the Musician,” *Learn The Bible*, accessed October 11, 2015, <https://www.learnthebible.org/satan-the-musician.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1998), ref. 5345.

engravings” – is more accurate and makes better sense considering the fact that one precious metal and nine precious stones are previously named in this pericope. So, whether Ezekiel was actually referring to Satan or not, there is absolutely no association with respect to Lucifer and music, in any way whatsoever, in these verses (or anywhere else in the Bible, for that matter).

In the history of this world, “we know of no culture without something akin to music.”<sup>20</sup> It began with Jubal, who is identified in Genesis 4:21 as “the father of all who play the harp and flute” (NKJV). The term *father* is often used in the Bible to signify one who originated, invented, or authored something (e.g., Genesis 4:20, John 8:44, Romans 4:11-12, and James 1:17). After Jubal is credited as the first inventor of musical instruments, the next scriptural reference to music is found in Genesis 31:27. Here, music-making with instruments and singing is viewed as an integral part of secular human culture, yet there is no evidence of music in connection to the worship of Jehovah God. The first mention of playing musical instruments, singing and dancing in a worship context does not occur until Exodus 15 after the Israelites have fled Egypt and successfully crossed the Red Sea.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

“I will sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.  
Both horse and driver  
he has hurled into the sea...”

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them:

“Sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.  
Both horse and driver  
he has hurled into the sea.” (Exodus 15:1, 20-21 NIV)

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<sup>20</sup> Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 15.

After this joyful account, music is biblically depicted as having become integrated into all aspects of social life, such as the celebrations of weddings (Matthew 11:17), war victories (Judges 5:11; 1 Samuel 18:6-7), finding water in the wilderness (Numbers 21:16-18), and the wayward returning home (Luke 15:20-27). Music was used as a call to arms leading troops into battle (Numbers 10:9; 2 Chronicles 13:12) and as a military strategy to confuse the enemy (2 Chronicles 20:20-22). The vexed spirit was calmed by music (1 Samuel 16:14-23). Songs of lament were sung to mourn the death of loved ones (2 Chronicles 35:25; Jeremiah 9:20; Luke 7:32). Paul encouraged Christians who were Spirit-filled to make music in their hearts to God and sing joyfully to one another (Ephesians 5:18b-20). When Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra of horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe, and all kinds of music begins to play, everyone in his kingdom is compelled to bow down and worship the golden image that he had erected, or else they are cast into a blazing furnace (Daniel 3). When David's orchestra of trumpet, harp, lyre, timbrel, strings, pipes, and resounding cymbals begins to play, everything that breathes, in heaven and on earth, is inspired to worship and praise the Lord (Psalm 150). After the Last Supper, Jesus sang a hymn together with his disciples (Matthew 26:17-36). And sometimes, even God sings when He is delighted with us (Zephaniah 3:17)!

Notice the breadth of musical diversity above. Throughout the Bible, there is diversity in music's purpose: celebrating, summoning, calming, mourning, fellowshipping, and worshipping. There is diversity in music venue: weddings, battlefields, wilderness, desert, palaces, funerals, and dining rooms. And there is diversity in types of music instruments: voice, percussion, string, brass, and woodwind. There is no

biblical prescription for music relative to its function, style, setting, form, or fashion. The logical conclusion is that music is a gift from God given for general use in the world.

The Tabernacle was a mobile sanctuary and the first worship center mentioned in the Bible. On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses detailed specifications for its construction and usage. Outside of creation, it would be a divine work of art! It takes seven chapters in Exodus to document the architectural design and building materials of the Tabernacle, including its appurtenances, accouterments, and rituals. The Ark of the Covenant, the Table of the Bread of Presence, the Golden Lampstand, the Wash Basin, the Altar of Incense, and the Altar of Burnt Offering provided a visual representation or pattern of the relationship of God to Israel. Directions were given for the crafting of and the material for each garment to be worn by the priests, the formulation of the anointing oil, and the ingredients for the incense. The selection and ordination of priests, and models for the initial and ongoing financing of the worship center were all outlined. Even the mandate to observe the Sabbath was reiterated. Yet, what is strikingly absent from these detailed instructions is any directive regarding worship – no hymns, singing, or instrumental music guidelines for worshipping God. In this beautiful work of art, Tabernacle worship would basically consist of animal sacrifices and monetary offerings (see Leviticus).

Before Solomon's temple was built, the Bible records that the only occurrences of songs and instruments in the practice of spontaneous worship were outside the Tabernacle (Judges 5; 2 Samuel 6:5). It would take the master psalmist, King David, to bring music inside the sanctuary. He took what was common – music and instruments used in everyday life – and made it holy, set aside for God. David composed scores of songs, established highly skilled choirs, and even invented musical instruments

specifically for the purpose of temple worship (1 Chronicles 23:5). And here is what Christian music artists, particularly those writing contemporary music for the church, need to take note of and step up their game. David was not satisfied to create for and present to God that which would merely be a carbon copy of the average and ordinary music of his day. He produced something fresh and creatively authentic. And it raised and became the new standard of music quality for worship and for the world. Not so much today, unfortunately.

The sobering thing about so much contemporary Christian music and art – all types, but especially the big-scale stuff, pseudo-symphonic, classicized popular and popularized classics, oversized choirs and instrumental groups, or, in their absence, the ever-present taped accompaniment, “excellence” in absentia – the trouble with so much of this is that it pretends so ardently, pushing for something that already exists in finer form. It is gross, large-scale, theme park imitation – inauthentic – hence so prone toward kitschiness. Without possessing an inner sense of indigeneity, so anxious to “be like,” so obsessed with overstatement and so lacking in humility and meekness, it sends out the worst signals to culture about the meaning of lean, disciplined and authentic faith.<sup>21</sup>

To put it in the words of Andy Crouch, executive editor of *Christianity Today*, David was a “culture keeper” and a “culture maker” because he “conserve[d] culture at its best and change[d] it for the better by offering the world something new.”<sup>22</sup> And something better.

It was David’s heart’s desire to build a beautiful temple – an immobile, permanent structure – for the Lord (1 Chronicles 22:7; 28:2). Even though he was denied this honor (1 Chronicles 22:8), God did grant to him the plans for a new, elaborate, and ornate center of worship (1 Chronicles 28:19) with the same degree of specificity and attention to detail as Moses had received for the tabernacle (1 Chronicles 28:11-18). These divine

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<sup>21</sup> Harold Best, *Music Through The Eyes of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 130.

<sup>22</sup> Crouch, *Culture Making*, 77.

directives included vocal and instrumental musical worship assignments for certain Levites (2 Chronicles 29:25). Three primary musical directors were appointed: Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. Four thousand musicians were organized and appointed to various areas of service, of which 288 were identified as being exceptionally skillful and set apart for special duties. All of these were gifted men who sang, played instruments, and prophesied to the glory of God, and David made them all full-time employees, with benefits (1 Chronicles 9:33; 16:37).

The Holy Spirit inspired the writer(s) of Chronicles to provide great detail about how the music “department” was organized, which is suggestive of its importance to temple worship. Those who were gifted were appointed, as opposed to the invitation of “whosoever will, let them come” extended in many churches today. Those who were highly skilled with technical proficiency were recognized and given opportunities for promotion and special duties. This fact should encourage Christian musicians not to become complacent, but to be ever vigilant about continuously improving their craft and, in so doing, offer God their best. The church must take note that the temple musicians were, in modern terms, paid a sustainable salary. This biblical precedence for supporting the musicians of the church makes the earlier statements from those believing the music staff should be made up only of volunteers scripturally baseless. While it is perfectly fine to offer one’s time and musical talent without remuneration, in light of scripture, the church needs to refrain from denigrating its musicians because they are, or desire to be, paid for their talented services.

King David went on to pass the blueprints for the new temple on to his successor, Solomon. Upon its completion, the articles from the original tabernacle were brought

into the temple, including the Ark of the Covenant. After those involved in temple service had been consecrated, what happened next is, arguably, one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring scenes in the Bible – one that even pastors today dream of being replicated in their churches.

All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps, and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: “He is good; his love endures forever.”

Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God. (2 Chronicles 5:12-14 NIV)

Throughout the New Testament, it is quite evident that the singing of psalms and hymns was a common practice by the church (Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13). What is interesting, however, is that the only depiction of or reference to musical instruments accompanying worship is in heaven (Revelation 5:7-9; 15:2). Does this silence provide a biblical basis for the prohibition of instruments for worship in the church? The Churches of Christ would agree that it does. The doctrine of this autonomous congregational denomination holds that the lack of a clear New Testament directive creates doubt, so it is better to err on the side of caution than risk angering God.<sup>23</sup> Some Orthodox churches are of the same opinion, citing quotes from “the fathers of the church” like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, Erasmus, John Calvin, John Wesley, and Charles Spurgeon that reveal their objection to the use of musical instruments in the church.<sup>24</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup> John Lankford, “Just The Facts On The Music Question,” *West Ark Church Of Christ*, 2000, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.westarkchurchofchrist.org/library/evidences/music.htm>.

argument is that the absence of any record of instrumental accompaniment in the first-century church implies God's preference for unaccompanied singing. These churches also cite the fact that the term *a cappella* in Italian literally means *in the manner of the chapel*,<sup>25</sup> which in their estimation evinces a historical practice in churches of singing without musical accompaniment. In challenging this, it is reasonable to presume that temple worship during the life of Jesus carried on the Davidic tradition of vocal and instrumental music. Also, taking into consideration the fact that Christians in the early church were heavily persecuted, it is a strong possibility that worshippers deferred to praising the Lord through singing alone because the noise of instruments would have given away their secret assemblage. To take a stance against the use of instruments in the church is to ignore completely the fact that music-making was an integral part of the world's culture long before its formal use in the worship of God. God's instructions to David referenced above (2 Chronicles 29:25) not only explicitly permit the use of instruments, but the Psalms reveal divine acceptance for all types of expressions of music in temple worship (Psalm 150).

In summary, scripture has been presented that substantiates and illustrates the point that artistic expression is sanctioned, allowed, demonstrated, and even utilized by God. We have established that music has always been an integral part of human culture, utilized in everything from social celebrations to the worship of pagan gods. From Genesis to now, music still "...has tremendous power to shape culture and touch the

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<sup>24</sup> Father Ernesto, "Why Do the Orthodox Not Use Instruments in Worship? - Part 01," *OrthoCuban*, July 2009, accessed January 22, 2016, <https://www.orthocuban.com/2009/07/why-do-the-orthodox-not-use-instruments-in-worship-part-01/>.

<sup>25</sup> Grammarist, "A capella," accessed January 9, 2016, <http://grammarist.com/spelling/a-cappella/>.

human heart.”<sup>26</sup> Scripture validates vocal and instrumental music, including the art of dance, as God-endorsed creative expressions of praise and worship, both on earth and in heaven. We have argued that there is no explicit or implicit scriptural reference restricting music solely for use in religious venues or for religious purposes. From the time of the apostles, “music has habitually played a key part in the church’s worship.”<sup>27</sup> The current model for music and worship in most Protestant churches is a result of King David establishing choirs and incorporating musical instruments as an integral part of worship services inside the temple. While there are a few churches that ban the use of instruments for worship today, they do it without a biblical directive expressly prohibiting their use. Therefore, “when the psalmist says, ‘Sing to him a new song; play skillfully and shout for joy’ (Ps. 33:3), he is issuing a summons to vocalists (‘sing to him’), composers (‘a new song’), instrumentalists (‘play skillfully’), and audiences (‘shout for joy’).”<sup>28</sup>

### **Feed My Sheep**

Pastoral care is a ministry of presence, patience, and perception that mirrors the Lord’s love and care for his creation. It is a ministry that should be found in every Christian church. According to John Patton, author of *Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide*, “An important part of being a pastor is balancing the work of caring for the lost sheep with the work of care for those who at least appear not to be lost.”<sup>29</sup> The key word,

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<sup>26</sup> Philip Ryken, *Art for God’s Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006), 58, Kindle.

<sup>27</sup> Begbie, Resounding Truth, 18.

<sup>28</sup> Ryken, 180, Kindle.

<sup>29</sup> John Patton, *Pastoral Care – An Essential Guide* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 2, Kindle.

*pastor*, comes from the Latin word *pastorem*, meaning “shepherd”. Even though shepherding was considered an occupation of low status during biblical times, the image of a shepherd is often presented positively in the Bible. Hebrew Scripture uses this image metaphorically to depict God as a gentle, loving caretaker in Isaiah 40:11 and as a personal provider, comforter, and protector in Psalm 23. Israel is the flock (Psalm 100:3) and the Lord is the shepherd (Psalm 28:9) who leads, gathers, and saves them (Psalm 80:1; Jeremiah 31:10).

At times, the Lord also appointed under-shepherds (Jeremiah 3:15) to lead, provide for, and protect his people. The most recognized under-shepherd in the Bible was David, to whom God prophesied, “You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel” (2 Samuel 5:2 NKJV). The Lord also admonished those he appointed, “Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? (Ezekiel 34:2 NIV).<sup>30</sup>

The New Testament continues this pastoral metaphor illustrating love as the motivator to care for the needs of others. It is most clearly exemplified in John 10:11 through Jesus Christ, who is self-described as the “Good Shepherd… [who] sacrifices his life for the sheep” (NLT). This good shepherd is contrasted with the hireling, in whom monetary motivation fails to produce a sincere heart of care and concern (John 10:12-13). Jesus goes on to extend to his followers the responsibility of providing shepherd-like care to others. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, also are you to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35 ESV). The Lord informed his followers that “loving one another” means providing pastoral care, even to strangers:

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<sup>30</sup> See also Jeremiah 23:1.

feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, and visiting those who are sick and in prison (Matthew 25:35-40). So, the Lord is setting the expectation that all of his followers, every member and pastor, must concern themselves with both the spiritual and the temporal needs of other people. The questions arise: “Is this really happening in our churches?” “If yes, are the members of the music staff included?” The research presented in chapter four suggests that this is not always the case.

Jesus’ response in Luke 15:1-7 to complaints that he was associating and dining “with sinners” began with a rhetorical question: “Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. Wouldn’t you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it?” (MSG) The obvious answer was, “Of course!” Sheep were not just valuable for their wool and for food. These shepherds knew their sheep personally, so much so that they could sense if one was not among the flock.<sup>31</sup> As the parable suggests, the shepherd goes to great lengths to find and ensure the safety of the lost sheep, even if it means leaving the flock for a while to do so. It is that important. That one sheep that has strayed far away from safety and nurture could be our itinerant jazz musician or choir director, disillusioned and frustrated with the church for lack of attention and care, away from the fold and vulnerable to predators and starvation. Just as the good shepherd cannot be content with this, neither can the church. It is all about reaching out and searching for any lost musical sheep out there.

In John 21, after the resurrection, Jesus sought out Peter, who had previously denied being affiliated with him, to restore him publicly and commission him: “Feed my lambs.” “Shepherd my sheep.” “Feed my dear sheep.” Each of these imperatives was

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<sup>31</sup> Jerry MacGregor and Marie Prys, *1001 Surprising Things You Should Know About The Bible* (New York: Fall River Press, 2006), 213-214.

preceded by the question, “Do you truly love me?” Perhaps one of the reasons this question was repeatedly asked was to let the church know that if a pastor truly loves Jesus, then that pastor will lovingly care for his sheep. The Lord entrusted Peter to be a good pastoral role model and to train others to do likewise. Years later, Peter would send a letter exhorting the leaders of the churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia:

Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor. (1 Peter 5:2-4 NLT)

When the Christian church was first established in Jerusalem after Pentecost, the new believers were taught many things by the apostles, including how to treat each other. Scripture says that they all fellowshipped harmoniously, ate together, and combined their resources to ensure that everyone was cared for (Acts 2:42-45). Since they generously shared everything they had, there was not a needy soul among them (Acts 4:32-35). As the church grew and expanded throughout the world, the Apostles wrote letters reminding these believers to keep on loving one another (1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 1 Peter 4:8; Hebrews 13:1; 1 Corinthians 13), and to hold one another in the highest regard (Philippians 2:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:13). The church is the body of Christ, and “if one part of the body suffers, all the other parts share its suffering” (1 Corinthians 12:26 GW). Paul reminds the church in Galatians 6:2-3, “Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ’s law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived” (GW).

The church can never separate itself from the biblical mandate to love and care for others. This means pastoral care must extend to everyone in the church, even our musicians, paid or not. Just because they are paid for their services does not relinquish the church of its spiritual duty to love them and show concern for their soul's health, mental soundness, and physical well-being, and to search for them when they are missing from the fold. It must be understood that pastoral care is not only a clerical responsibility, but that of the laity as well, as indicated by the scriptures above. The church must manifest that love by which our music artists will truly know that we are Christians.

Several of the problems and issues raised in chapter one have been addressed in this chapter. One of the underlying concerns from which most questions have emerged is related to God's intended role for music and whether our Christian music artists are in violation of it. We have shown that believers who are presently, or are seeking to become, professional music artists can take comfort knowing there is biblical support for pursuing a career in the secular music industry. We have shown that the Bible, almost matter-of-factly, records and depicts music as an art form that is thoroughly established in the world's cultures. And there is no sensing or statement suggesting that God has any problem with this diversity and pluralism of music. It bears witness to God's love of diversity and pluralism in general, which is reflected in all of creation – oceans and mountains, rainforests and deserts, multiple species of creatures great and small, and the myriad musical instruments Scripture names. It was God's love of the art form of music that ushered it into the sanctuary. King David, who was musically gifted and anointed, cultivated a new culture of temple worship and praise and punctuated it with psalms, choirs, and all kinds of musical instruments. It is interesting that the Holy Spirit

orchestrated and ordained the inclusion of a songbook in the Bible. So, music is an art form that is biblically unrestricted in terms of use, venue, and culture.

There was previous discussion on the topic of whether musicians in the church should be financially compensated for their services. While there is no biblical mandate requiring that the church or temple pay its musicians, there is nothing prohibiting it either. In fact, the Bible documents King David sharing God's plans for the new temple, which included the appointment of thousands of musicians and a few music directors, and notice to all that this is how they would make their living. So there is biblical precedence to support the payment of musicians by the church.

On the topic of intentionality about providing pastoral care, the next chapter will provide comments from Christian music artists interviewed for this thesis-project that reflect the failure of many churches to nurture, inspire, pray for, and holistically support them. As a result, this has left them unequipped with the "special protection"<sup>32</sup> necessary to resist the dark side of the music industry, unhealthy and ungodly lifestyles, and the prevailing secularism of their workplaces. Pastoral care and a ministry of holistic support from the church body is the only way our musicians can survive, not only the trappings of fame and fortune, but also the hirelings that seek to exploit them and the wolves that seek to devour them when they have to work outside the safety of the flock. The music industry, known for its corruption and unethical practices, is in desperate need of cultural reform. That is why Christian musicians need to be present, respected, and influential in their workplaces in such a way that their colleagues will be able to detect "the accent of

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<sup>32</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 119.

Jesus.”<sup>33</sup> In order for the music industry to be “salted” and “lighted”, the church must also fulfill its calling to prepare and commission music artists “who are not only skillful but also theologically well-equipped, grounded in a fellowship, and living obedient lives.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 83.

<sup>34</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 127.

## CHAPTER THREE

### INSIGHTS AND RESOURCES

#### **Insights**

This section will draw on the insights of ministers, musicians and theologians in literature to address the “sacred versus secular” music conflict presented in chapter one between the church and its musical artists.

Andy Crouch, executive editor at Christianity Today, in his book *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, encourages churches to broaden their perspectives and “take the risky path of celebrating their members who do not go into ‘fulltime Christian service’ but who serve Christ full time in their own arena of culture.”<sup>1</sup> For those churches that think that people who are gifted in creative arts like music should only exercise their talents in church, perhaps it would be helpful to observe someone who stepped out on that “risky path”.

Author of *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts*, Steven Turner, has challenged this line of thinking through the art of writing.<sup>2</sup> He had a diverse and colorful career as a journalist and editor for a British rock magazine. He authored the biographies of music legends like Johnny Cash, Marvin Gaye, Van Morrison, and Cliff Richards. He has written four best-selling volumes of children’s poetry. He is also the author of such books as *The Gospel According to the Beatles*, *Hungry for Heaven: Rock and Roll and*

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Tony Cummings, “Steve Turner: The Author Talks about His Books on ‘Amazing Grace’ and Cliff Richard,” *Cross Rhythms*, July 29, 2005, accessed December 2, 2015, [http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/articles/music/Steve\\_Turner\\_The\\_author\\_talks\\_about\\_his\\_books\\_on\\_Amazing\\_Grace\\_and\\_Cliff\\_Richard/14548/p1/](http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/articles/music/Steve_Turner_The_author_talks_about_his_books_on_Amazing_Grace_and_Cliff_Richard/14548/p1/).

*the Search for Redemption, Amazing Grace: The Story of America's Most Beloved Song, An Illustrated History of the Gospel, and Popcultured: Thinking Christianly About Style, Media and Entertainment.*

Turner clearly has modeled his expressed belief that, whether writers, musicians or painters, Christians should not be relegated solely to creating explicitly religious art.<sup>3</sup> However, he does put the responsibility squarely in the lap of Christian artists of all genres to guard against “blithely dismiss[ing] the convictions of critics because some of their concerns may be founded.”<sup>4</sup> This is a good suggestion for a few reasons, particularly in terms of addressing the issue between the church and its music artist. First, it can serve to foster discussion instead of dictate, which would only exacerbate the conflict. Second, it puts the onus on the music artist to seek out the reasoning behind the church’s viewpoints.

What other responsibilities do our music artists have? What else should they be mindful of as believers in the music industry?

Turner strongly believes that Christians in the arts are to be in and not of the world. “We become worldly not by engaging with the world, but by allowing it to shape our thinking.”<sup>5</sup> This is why, with all the trappings of the music industry detailed in chapter one, it is so important for believing musicians to, as Schaeffer puts it, “remain redemptively within the church.”<sup>6</sup> Spiritual nurturing and discipline is key to keeping our

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<sup>3</sup> Steve Turner, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL InterVarsity Press, 2001), 81.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 21, Kindle.

musicians' minds continually renewed. Only then will Christian music artists be able to successfully resist conformity and temptation.

Much more simplistic than Schaeffer's book, Phillip Ryken's *Art for God's Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts* would be a good primer for music artists to begin to connect their gift with their faith. In it, Ryken provides a biblical overview of art that is concise and insightful. His four fundamental principles were actually illustrated in the previous chapter:

- God calls and gifts the artist.
- God loves all kinds of art.
- God maintains high aesthetic standards for goodness, truth, and beauty.
- God's glory is art's highest goal.<sup>7</sup>

The church needs to, first, understand and accept these principles, and then, teach them to its music staff and remind them of their responsibility to honor and acknowledge the Giver with their gift. Ryken reminds artists in all genres that "the true purpose of art is the same as the true purpose of anything...art is an expression of our love – love for God and love for our neighbor."<sup>8</sup> And Schaeffer would add that true spirituality, therefore, is to love and worship God holistically, art and soul.<sup>9</sup>

As the church provides its musicians with a robust theology of work, teaching them to honor God with both their gift and their witness, they must also be made aware that, by working in the secular music industry, they have the opportunity to, among other

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<sup>7</sup> Philip Ryken, *Art for God's Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ryken, *Art for God's Sake*, 280.

<sup>9</sup> Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible*, 58.

things, positively influence mainstream culture. As they become more and more mature in their faith, Turner says there should be an inner desire “to say something about what they believe holds the key to the human problem.”<sup>10</sup> The beauty and power of artistic expression – musical and otherwise – is that it has the ability to make sense of the world – a point which, through the Christian artist, should be at the very least inferred from the backdrop of the cross. To say it another way, while it may not be overt, one ought to be able to detect “the accent of Jesus.”<sup>11</sup>

So the church cannot afford to disregard its responsibility to provide pastoral care to its music artists, but needs to walk alongside and help them regularly wrestle with their secular work culture and its implications. In order to do this effectively, Bob Kauflin, director of Sovereign Grace Music in Louisville, in his blog *Worship Matters* admonishes the church to withhold snap judgment of secular musicians who profess Christ, and consider the critical need and opportunity for godly witness in that marketplace. He reminds his readers that no one can know the motive of another “from a distance,” so these musicians deserve at least the benefit of the doubt, as well as sincere prayers from fellow believers for the ability to resist temptation and to glorify God in their work. He challenges the assumption that all secular music is godless and/or anti-Christian. The author’s advice to Christian music artists is that they ask themselves what their motives are for wanting to be involved in secular music. While this advice has merit, at the same time it seems to reflect a double standard if the same question is not asked of everyone who is employed outside the church. Nevertheless, Kauflin affirms the belief that “the

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<sup>10</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 81.

<sup>11</sup> Turner, *Imagine*, 83.

world needs to see people in every arena who have been genuinely changed by the gospel.”<sup>12</sup>

It must be reiterated that the music artist desperately needs the pastoral care and spiritual support of the church in order to rise above the challenges of a career in the music industry documented in chapter one successfully, and be a “salty” witness in the workplace. This can only happen when the church and its music artists agree to take the “risky” path that leads to working harmoniously in service to the Lord and to each other. And once the band begins to play, as Wynton Marsalis describes it in his book *Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life*, it will be a demonstration of “the purest possible expression of community, having made the choice to become ‘us’ instead of ‘me’.”<sup>13</sup>

## **Resources**

In chapter one, we identified several industry-related challenges that are common to all music artists of all genres. These issues were raised because they pose a significant threat to a musician’s career, as well as their overall health and well-being. We also discussed a few problems that are unique to Christians who are professional secular music artists. What is being presented in this chapter are good resources that address some of these issues and are currently available. (Since it was challenging to find professional Christian-based services and resources that we are willing to recommend, we

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<sup>12</sup> Bob Kauflin, “Can Christian Musicians Play Secular Music for God’s Glory?” *Worship Matters*, January 18, 2008, accessed August 31, 2014, <http://www.worshipmatters.com/2008/01/18/can-christian-musicians-play-secular-music-for-gods-glory/>.

<sup>13</sup> Wynton Marsalis, *Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life* (New York: Random House, 2008), 1100, Kindle.

will include non-faith-based options as well.) We will also present parallel services and ministries designed for celebrities in the entertainment and sports industries from which we can glean ideas to create spiritual support resources for Christian music artists.

### Addictive Behaviors, Recovery and Rehabilitation

#### **Ocean Breeze Recovery** (<http://oceanbreezerecovery.org/>)

Ocean Breeze Recovery is a highly rated, licensed and credentialed Florida-based facility that offers non-faith-based and Christian-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, as well as addiction education and prevention programs. They offer residential and outpatient treatment options. Post recovery services include participation in addiction alumni programs that will locate and connect alums with the local support groups and recovery resources located within their community that they can turn to when needed. Their addiction counselors are very friendly and helpful, and available toll-free 24-hours a day. The primary reasons for recommending this facility include their favorable rating and the fact that their Christian-based programs integrate Christ-centered treatment offerings with traditional treatment approaches.

#### **The Fix** (<https://www.thefix.com/>)

The Fix is an online resource that provides news, articles and opinion pieces on addiction and recovery. Musicians will take an interest in the addiction and recovery stories featuring M&E celebrities and sports figures. This well-constructed website offers extensive information on the latest drug and alcohol addiction recovery therapies, rehabilitation reviews and tips on living sober. Its “Resources” tab provides help and

information links to everything from twenty-five behavioral, emotional, and substance addictions, to interventionists and rehabilitation insurance options. There are also comprehensive listings for valuable resources, including 12-step programs and addiction recovery fellowships, non-faith based programs, and professional organizations.

### Financial and Medical Assistance

#### **Jazz Foundation of America** (<http://www.jazzfoundation.org/>)

The Jazz Foundation of America has been providing assistance for the temporal needs of veteran blues and jazz musicians in crisis for over 26 years. They currently support about 5,000 cases each year, offering help with rent or mortgage, utilities payments, and food. They also help to provide performance opportunities for these elderly musicians to play in venues like schools, nursing homes, and hospitals. JFA has been in partnership with Englewood Hospital and Medical Center doctors and staff for over two decades, negotiating and vying for essential services necessary to keep music veterans alive and meaningfully working.

#### **Musicians' Assistance Programs** (<http://www.local802afm.org/about/benefits-services/musicians-assistance-program/>)

The Musician's Assistance Program (MAP) in New York provides services for the 10,000 musicians of the 95-year-old Local 802 American Federation of Musicians and their families. They help them with obtaining free or low-cost treatment for drug and alcohol problems. In addition, they provide assistance for musicians with personal, relational, and work-related problems. They also offer advocacy on behalf of its members for emergency financial assistance. In providing these services, MAP hopes to reduce

interruptions that can affect the musician's ability to "perform with maximum artistry and productivity."

### **MusiCares Foundation** ([muscicares.org](http://muscicares.org))

The MusiCares Foundation was established by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in order to provide critical assistance to music artists in need. With confidentiality and integrity, they offer services and resources for financial, medical, and personal emergencies. For those in the music industry with addiction issues, they offer help in obtaining addiction recovery services, and provide free recovery support groups in Los Angeles, Nashville, Austin, New Orleans, New York, Seattle, and Fort Collins, Colorado. These are just a few of the human service issues that MusiCares focuses resources on in an effort to improve the health and welfare of the music community. One thing this organization has done that is noteworthy is create a Safe Harbor Room at the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) annual event in Los Angeles. It is a clean and sober room for recovering addicts attending NAMM, is staffed by certified addiction recovery specialists, and offers 12-step meetings twice daily throughout the event. Many of the music artists interviewed for this thesis-project attend NAMM each year. Like the multi-faith center staffed by chaplains at the Olympic Village, a similar place of spiritual refuge could be set up at other major music events where musicians could fellowship with others of like faith and receive prayer and spiritual counseling.

## Marriage and Relationships

### **Rock Star Therapy (<http://rockstartherapy.com/>)**

Jodi Milstein is a licensed marriage and family therapist and professional clinical counselor whose clients are musicians, singers, and crewmembers. She understands the rewards and challenges of life on the road and in the studio, as well as the strain and toll it takes on family dynamics. Her business, Rock Star Therapy, is located in Los Angeles where she specializes in working with creative individuals, as well as relationship issues, conflict resolution, recovery from substance abuse/dependence, life transitions, and eating disorders. She is uniquely qualified and recommended because of her years of experience as a former music executive, working with agents, producers, and managers, as well as such super stars as Sheryl Crow, Lionel Richie, Amy Grant, and Sting.

## Discipleship and Sustaining the Spiritual Heart

### **RYFO (<http://ryfo.org/>)**

The RYFO network is a community that is passionate about caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs unique to touring musicians. Founded by Nick Greenwood, this organization partners with individuals, churches, companies, and organizations nationwide, offering a wide range of services for free to music artists. One very interesting feature of this organization that we are interested in replicating is the tour chaplains, or “road pastors,” that are provided upon request. RYFO is definitely a model of our objective of coming alongside of and discipling music artists, teaching them to love God and to be “salt” and “light” on the road.

## Parallel Ministries

Professional music artists are similar to professional athletes and sports figures in that they each have to deal with enticements that threaten their moral character and emotional health. They would also benefit from having access to spiritual support resources designed specifically to meet unique needs of people in their profession. The four programs presented below target the spiritual needs of professional and Olympic sports athletes. One or more elements of each program can be modified and offered as a resource for professional Christian music artists or pastors.

### **Fellowship of Christian Athletes (<http://fca.org/>)**

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) was established in 1954 and is currently America's largest Christian sports organization. It was founded by Eastern Oklahoma University men's basketball coach, Don McLanen (who died just 2 weeks before the time of this writing, at the age of 91) and other founding members, including Branch Rickey (who is best known for integrating Major League Baseball by signing Jackie Robinson). According to FCA's website, Don initially approached them thinking, "If athletes could endorse automobiles and cigarettes, why [can't] they endorse this thing that was about life?" And the rest is history. After more than sixty years, FCA has become a global non-profit spanning 47 countries. The target group has grown from professional athletes to coaches and athletes from youth to pros. And FCA's vision is for them all to influence the world for Jesus Christ.

There are two websites – one for athletes and one for coaches. Both are robust, intuitive, and filled with information and Christian resources for sports communities. They feature articles, blogs, videos, devotionals and Bible study materials, testimonials,

games, and outreach ideas that are available to anyone who accesses these websites. Volunteer minister applications and employment opportunities are also offered. Several specialty camps are held throughout the year around the country for children of all ages. Adult athletes and coaches specialize in areas like athletic skills and leadership development, talent evaluation, volunteer training, and ministry coaching.

While the size of FCA as an organization is overwhelming, there are some elements that could be harnessed and developed for the support of Christian music artists. Creating a vision statement that includes a reminder to “influence the world for Christ” should be adopted. FCA’s expansion to target and include non-professional athletes can be used to develop a spiritual support model for Christian collegiate music majors that includes making similar online resources available, as well as organizing local or campus Bible study groups, which would help to establish community.

### **Pro Athletes Outreach (<https://pao.org/>)**

Pro Athletes Outreach (PAO) is a Christian organization that I was introduced to during an interview with one of its founders, former NFL player Norm Evans (see chapter four). The purpose of PAO is to help professional players and coaches in Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Football League (NFL) and their spouses “grow as disciples of Jesus and positively impact their spheres of influence.” Compared to FCA, PAO’s website is very simple. It provides links to over 100 exceptional video and written testimonials from Christian professional baseball and football players. The website also advertises PAO’s hosting of two separate annual MLB and NFL events, both entitled “The Increase Conference”. These events are “programmed and planned with the culture of the [NFL or MLB] in mind.” The pros and their spouses or fiancées gather

each year for a few days of “unique community, deep interaction with Jesus, and simply to reconnect, as couples or with their friends around the league.”

The creation of videos of Christian musicians giving their testimonies can become both a source of empowerment and encouragement to fellow believers and a “salty” influence on the music industry at large. Although there may be a cost associated with recording and editing, the potential for powerful, positive impact makes it worth pursuing. The other idea gleaned from PAO is developing an annual retreat for the purpose of strengthening and edifying the spousal relationships of Christian music artists, particularly those who tour. “Road widows”, as they are called, are like pastors’ wives in that their need for spiritual care is often overlooked and unrealized. This would be one way to help remedy the effects of loneliness for both spouses.

#### **Coaches Time Out (<https://www.coachestimeout.org/>)**

Coaches Time Out (CTO) was launched in 1988 to teach Christian coaches and their spouses how they can have an eternal impact in the lives of young athletes. Coaches are equipped with the necessary tools to instill the types of values that will make them dedicated, resilient, respectful, and responsible competitors and people. Each year, about ten three-day conferences held throughout the country are designed to address the needs of both coach and spouse. And they cover everything, “from coaching tips to relationships, finances to faith.” Their website offers a brief history of the organization and conference registration information.

## **Olympic Chaplains** (<http://www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk/overview/olympic-games/>)

Olympians can sometimes be tempted to risk taking bribes, using steroids, and participating in other dishonest practices in an effort to ensure competitive success. There are also times when these athletes have to deal with personal tragedy, or even death of a fellow competitor or teammate, during the Olympic Games. Fortunately, within each Olympic Village, there is a special multi-faith center where chaplains from around the globe convene to offer prayers and avail themselves to provide spiritual support for the competing athletes. Paul Kobylarz, head of the Christian chaplains at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, shared that the chaplains also lead Bible studies and worship services daily during the Olympic Games.<sup>14</sup> This is a great model and it was very inspirational in the development of a network of pastors and chaplains who avail themselves to provide spiritual support to music artists for this project.

## **Summary**

Several good resources were presented in the first section of this chapter. They have value because they can be used as referrals to address some of the problems and challenges with which our music artists may currently need help. In researching these resources, we found that several of them contain elements or modules that we could possibly use as models as we plan for future resource developments for this project. Each of the faith-based organizations listed under Parallel Ministries have components that can also be utilized in the creation of robust resources for our musicians. This will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

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<sup>14</sup> Luanne Radecki Blackburn, “An Olympic Chaplain,” *Christianity Today*, February 15, 2010, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/februaryweb-only/17.12.0.html>.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A NEW DAY FOR CHRISTIAN MUSIC ARTISTS

It would be difficult to identify a single work environment that neither needs, nor would benefit from, having a work force of honest, fair-minded, cooperative, ethical, skillful, dutiful, and dependable persons who are doing their work for the glory of God. The music industry – infamously characterized by and linked to corruption, scandals, and unethical business practices – is no exception. The exploitation of its artists is both historic and an ongoing saga. In several places in his biography of the life of Jaco Pastorius, author Bill Milkowski levies indictments against the music industry and how it mistreats its musicians. “[T]he system is so stacked against [musicians] that they’re fighting just to feed themselves, while the people who own our music are living high on the hog. It’s like legal larceny...”<sup>1</sup> Bill accuses the musicians’ union of disregarding its own, and even the political system is charged with failing to offer “[a] healthcare safety net for those who need it most.”<sup>2</sup>

Not only are music artists vulnerable in terms of industry malpractice, but these gifted performers are also swayed by the allure of the hedonistic (and often self-destructive) lifestyle typical of professional performers in all genres. Christians who are professional music artists are uniquely positioned, not only to impact their talented colleagues positively, but also to transform the culture of the music industry by modeling biblical standards pertaining to workplace ethics and the respectful treatment of others.

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Milkowski, *Jaco: The Extraordinary and Tragic Life of Jaco Pastorius* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 174.

<sup>2</sup> Milkowski, *Jaco*, preface.

The potential for significant influence here is so great and so needed that it calls for the church to revisit its relationship with and concern for believers who are professional music artists. It should be the case that the church is already intentionally and wholeheartedly tending to the soul's health of their musicians. Yet, what we have shown in chapter one supports the argument that music artists tend to be a spiritually underserved (even exploited) demographic by the church – appreciated for their ability to enhance the worship experience, but often highly criticized, ostracized, and spiritually overlooked because they make a living performing secular music. To address this issue, this research project was implemented and guided by the following question: *What resource(s) can be provided to music artists who are Christians that will spiritually support and empower them to live out the claims of their faith in their workplace and, thereby, effectively “salting and lighting” the secular music industry?*

This chapter reviews the methodology, selection of participants, and data collection for this research project. The summarization of this project and next steps will be included in chapter five.

## **Research Methodology**

The purpose of this research project was to address the above question in two ways: 1) by producing three biblically-based podcasts specifically designed for the spiritual edification of music artists who are believers, and 2) by providing a path to pastoral care and support through the establishment of a small, national network of ministers willing to spiritually serve Christian music artists. A qualitative research methodology was employed for this project and conducted using semi-structured

interviews. This approach was selected because, in addition to utilizing a set of standard questions for the participants, semi-structured follow-up interviewing allows for deviation from the questionnaire, which provides opportunity to get clarification on responses and to follow the natural progression of discussions. Since respondents are free to answer each question in their own terms, this fosters a safe environment in which to gather trustworthy and comparable data, and also facilitates building interviewer-interviewee rapport.

### **Selection of Participants**

There were two groups of participants for this project – music artists and ministers. The professional musicians in my immediate family assisted in the recruiting process by recommending and making the initial contact of several potential musical participants. Five of these persons were interviewed. Of the remaining participants, two of them served on the church music staff during my recent pastorate in Boston. Another was a fellow band member at a church in Maryland where I was pianist and minister of music years ago. Ministerial colleagues recommended three instrumentalists. My professor recommended a pianist, and my bishop introduced a vocal recording artist to me. Finally, two are currently students at a Boston music college. They were recruited because of their musical career pursuits and in anticipation that this project will produce future resources that will help to ground young Christians spiritually who are preparing to become professional music artists. The following criteria were used for the selection of these participants:

1. Self-identified as Christian
2. Music-making is, has been, or will be their primary means of income
3. Toured as a performing artist

Most of the pastoral interviewees are colleagues of mine, either through my denomination (A.M.E. Zion) or seminary (Fuller and Gordon-Conwell). One exception to this is a pastor and author who graciously accepted my email request to interview him for this project. A participant recommended the inclusion of chaplains since they are trained to listen and counsel. So I added a former pastoral associate of mine who is now a full-time chaplain. And one person is a minister of music and certified life coach that counsels musicians. The criteria for selecting the pastoral participants is as follows:

1. Senior pastor, associate minister, or chaplain with counseling experience
2. At least five years of experience providing pastoral care to church music staff
3. Experience successfully providing spiritual counsel to celebrities or public personalities, preferable
4. Known by me personally, or highly recommended by someone I know

A total of fifteen music artists and twelve ministers participated in this research project. The combined participant pool of music artists and ministers was comprised of men and women, multiple ethnicities, and ages ranging from 19-65 years old.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected using a questionnaire for music artists, a questionnaire for pastors/ministers, and a podcast evaluation form. Prior to distribution, the Institutional Review Board of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary approved all questionnaires, forms, and consent documents.

Each musical and pastoral participant received and signed an informed consent document that detailed the purpose and procedure of the research project. This document explained how questions or concerns they may have regarding the project would be addressed, that they were free to withdraw from this project at any time, and that any data collected prior to their withdrawal would be destroyed. It was noted that they were participating in a voluntary project without compensation. All notes from the interviews and the podcast feedback, as well as any email correspondences, would be kept in password-protected files on my personal computer, accessible only by myself. Most importantly, the document explained that I was taking full responsibility to retain the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant.

Prior to being interviewed, music artists received their questionnaire and an evaluation form via email. The questionnaire was designed to explore their overall music journey, how they interacted with church leaders and members (as part of the music staff), and their personal perspective on the value of access to pastoral care. They were also asked if a podcast tailored to believers who are music artists would be of any value to them. The podcast evaluation form was brief and included a request for recommended topics of interest for future broadcasts. Participants were instructed to complete the evaluation and return it to me via email. Feedback from the first two podcasts would be used to make content and quality improvements for the third and final recording.

Prior to their interviews, ministerial participants electronically received their questionnaire. It was designed to gather information about their current location, years in ministry, a description of their current church's music ministry (e.g., music styles, instruments, paid or volunteer musicians, etc.), the percentage of secular music

professionals on staff, how pastoral care is extended to their music staff, and their willingness to provide music artists (that are participants in this study) with pastoral care and spiritual counseling on an as needed basis. A question was also included to spark discussion on their experience in providing pastoral care and counseling to public figures.

Semi-structured interviews via phone, Skype or FaceTime were conducted with each music artist and pastoral participant individually at a mutually agreed upon time. These interviews averaged fifteen minutes and were not electronically recorded.

The podcasts were created using Apple's GarageBand software and an IK Multimedia iRig Mic Studio digital microphone. The recordings were done by myself in a make shift "studio" in my home and edited using GarageBand. The decision to limit the length of these podcasts to around five minutes was made in an effort to make listening to and evaluating them more appealing to busy music artists.

### **Music Artists Interviews**

The fifteen music artists interviewed were located in the following states: Alabama, California, New York, Massachusetts, Virginia, Florida, and Maryland. The ethnicities represented were African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic. The average participant age was 33 years and 43 percent were the children of preachers. They began playing an instrument or singing at the age of 6 years old, on average. While most of them play multiple instruments, here is the breakdown of the two primary instruments by these artists: 7 vocalists, 5 drummers/percussionists, 3 guitarists/bassists, 4 keyboardists, 1 saxophone and 1 rapper. All of those interviewed had at least some college and have

performed several genres of music including jazz, classical, gospel, opera, R&B, funk, and hip hop – just to name a few.

The exceptional caliber of these music artists needs to be mentioned. Not only do they sing and are proficient on several instruments, many of these men and women are music writers, arrangers, and producers. They have accompanied, opened for, recorded, toured, and collaborated with some of the world's most popular and distinguished music professionals: George Duke, Stevie Wonder, Lionel Hampton, George Benson, Quincy Jones, John Scofield, Jennifer Hudson, Jennifer Holiday, Lauryn Hill, Lady Gaga, Marcus Miller, Trey Anastasio, Earth, Wind and Fire, Santana, Ty Tribbett, Israel Houghton, Roy Hargrove, Esperanza Spaulding, and Jon Batiste.

#### Church Instrumental or Vocalist Experience

Questions about the respondents' personal experiences as church music artists was done in order to validate their qualification to assess the treatment of musicians by the church's leaders and members.

Two have no church experience as a paid music staffer, but they do participate musically and, thus, where possible, responded to certain questions in this subsection based on their observations of others. Of those who had church music staff experience, all had been paid and participated in the following positions:

Band members – 12

Musical Director or Minister of Music – 8

Worship Leader – 6

Choir Director – 6

Music Pastor – 1

The musical naissance for most of the respondents was playing or singing in church. “Church gave me the outlet to cut my teeth musically and to glean from the lives of those who were musically and spiritually seasoned.” As a result of their spiritual foundation, several interviewees described a dedication to their church jobs that often surpassed the compensation they received (or lack thereof). More than half have volunteered their services at times. One person said that playing at church was not his career, but his gift to God. Another musician recalled accepting a low-paying offer to play in a church after receiving counsel from his father: “You’ll make more later from what you learn here!”

Each music artist shared stories about having had great relationships with most pastors, and having experienced church members who were welcoming, giving, and appreciative of how their music talent contributed to the quality of the service. “They gave us lots of creative freedom,” one instrumentalist shared. Another said, “The pastor checks [on us] to see if all is well.” Three respondents expressed sincere appreciation for pastors who understood the demands of their profession and were kind enough to “hold their spot” in the church band whenever they were on tour. A third of the music artists spoke in glowing terms about being supported by church members and pastors who came to see them play in venues outside the church. One musician’s summarization was echoed by several others, “The overall experience [playing for churches] was positive.”

There are challenges in every workplace and, unfortunately, the Christian church is no exception. Several music artists expressed annoyance with difficult choir members

who were constantly “complaining”, “petty”, and “un-Christian” in terms of their interaction with one another and the music staff. Receiving Sunday’s hymns too late to rehearse them with the choir was also a common source of irritation. However, by and large, the music artists’ greatest frustration revolved around pastor-musician interactions. At least four musicians experienced feeling “demeaned” and highly “embarrassed” after being publically insulted by certain pastors from the pulpit during worship service – once, for something as innocent as playing the wrong hymn. “There’s a right and a wrong way to correct someone, and it should never be done to humiliate or put someone in their place in front of the congregation.” Some experienced pastors were too “controlling” when it came to things like music selection or even picking soloists. “[The pastor] was trying to do *my* job. How would it look if I tried to tell him what he ought to preach?” Sadly, over half of the respondents had experiences with pastors who were, as one musician tried to discreetly put it, “...inconsistent on the business side of things.” When asked for clarification, he said flatly, “[The pastor] would try to get away with not paying us!” Even with a contract in place, musicians shared that pastors are notorious for trying to get them to play for services without compensation. One person experienced a pastor who refused to pay him and another music artist when both arrived to church a little late one Sunday, but still in time to play everything after the introit. When they reminded the pastor that they had faithfully played at that church for six months without receiving a salary, he admonished them, “You all shouldn’t be doing this for the money anyway!” There was another musician who used to drive 250 miles one way to play at a church each Sunday. He recounted that, on more than one occasion, the pastor would wait until the service had ended before telling the band members that they would not be getting

paid that week. Unethical actions like these leave a bad taste in musicians' mouths because they reflect a complete lack of pastoral integrity and an utter disregard for the music performer's livelihood. And, since each of these events occurred between fellow believers, they effectively served to widen the gulf between Christian musicians and the church.

#### Pastoral Support as Secular Music Artist

When asking about being a Christian who performs secular music, the majority of interviewees spoke of positive responses from pastors and supportive church members. One artist said, "My first time rapping on stage was at a church event...and [the church] was very supportive." One of the singers said she never experienced any negativity, but was only reminded to stay grounded in Christ Jesus. Interestingly, all the musicians whose parents were pastors said they received nothing but encouragement from their family, as well as their church. One of the student respondents said her dad (who is a pastor) is fine with her performing secular music, as long as her clothing is not too revealing. On the other hand, there were several colorful stories told by those who, over the years, had encountered churches with different standards. A pastor told one respondent that only jazz and classical music were acceptable for Christian musicians to play outside the church. It was further explained that the pastor's reasoning was that "jazz doesn't have any words and it's not saying anything at all; and classical – it's just classical!" Another musician knew of pastors who had openly stated that church music is the only right and godly or God-glorifying music. Finally, an interviewee stated that the pastor "didn't care as long as I showed up on Sunday morning."

## How the Church Can Best Serve Its Music Artists

There were two overwhelmingly dominant responses for this subcategory: 1) paying music artists a fair wage, and 2) genuinely caring about their holistic well-being. The respondents stated that they want to be respected by the church as “hard workers” who are deserving of a “decent wage”. They do not want fellow believers to make them feel guilty for getting paid for what they do. “Remember, this is our livelihood – we’ve got mouths to feed and families to support just like everybody else.” Several interviewees wanted the church to consider paying them as employees by taking out taxes from their salaries and issuing W-2’s each year instead of 1099’s.

A few also wanted the church to consider offering health benefits. “But don’t just treat us as mere employees,” one musician commented, “because we need [spiritual] care, prayer, and Bible study too!” Another said emphatically, “Know our names! And care about us beyond the service we provide each week.” “[Church members and pastors] don’t come up and talk to us, and that makes us feel isolated.” “Care more – ask us how we’re doing. We need to be ministered to. A lot of us don’t have the drive to seek God. So it would be good if [the church] would seek us out.” “Pray with us and treat us like professionals.” “A lot of musicians do stuff outside the church, so having that encouragement and knowing you have the support of the church helps. It reminds us that we are Christians first!”

## Value of Having Access to Pastoral Care/Counseling

When asked this question, one musician emphatically remarked, “If I don’t know [the pastor], I’m not going to call or talk to [the pastor]. There must be a relationship

first.” This was a legitimate concern that had not been considered when this project was being developed. Since this response occurred during the second interview session for this project, it created some concern as to whether, in the end, the data would support the assumption that offering pastoral care as a resource to Christian performing artists would be perceived as a valuable resource. All of the other interviewees, however, responded very positively and enthusiastically to this. Several of them have no active member association with any local church and thought that access to spiritual support in the form of pastoral care and counseling could be especially beneficial to touring music artists.

“Touring musicians can’t really get connected or plugged in to a strong Christian fellowship. So it would be incredibly valuable to have a [pastoral] rock in their life.” One interviewee made a similar statement and went on to recommend having a staff dedicated to touring musicians. Another comment was that, particularly for traveling Christian music artists, “it would be nice to have spiritual care on the road...[because we’re] not always thinking about God on the road, so we need someone to keep us accountable.”

One respondent said that access to pastoral care would be “great” because it is non-existent for him and the other musicians at his current church, which affects the “chemistry between musicians and the church leadership and members.” One challenge to the effectiveness of making this spiritual resource available to Christian music artists is that, while “everybody needs this,” many musicians feel generally “overlooked” by the church and “have lost trust in pastors and ministers.”

## Value of Podcast Series for Christian Music Artists

Every interviewee responded positively to the concept of a podcast series specifically designed for Christian music artists. Interestingly, most said that they currently listen to podcasts several times a week, and even offered recommendations during their interview:

“[It would be] good, as long as it is relatable to current events.”

“Having something other than music to learn that would be poured into us would be good.”

“Podcasts are convenient, easily accessed, and just make sure they are uploaded consistently.”

“Short is great!”

“This would be wonderfully helpful, especially on the road, because sometimes we get caught up and distracted from spiritual things as musicians.”

“This is really important and really good idea. Everyone is not ready for it, but when they are, it’ll be there for them.”

“It would be like a lighthouse in the career of the sea of musicianship.”

## Willingness to Evaluate Podcasts

All interviewees expressed an ardent willingness to evaluate the podcasts.

## Summarization of Podcast Evaluations

The podcasts for this project were developed as a means of filling the spiritual and sermonic gaps experienced when music artists travel. The idea for this was birthed out of casual conversations with a few touring musicians about how they receive spiritual nourishment while on the road. What stood out was that only a few of these musicians had a pastor who demonstrated concern for their soul's health when they missed weeks,

even months, of worship services and/or Bible studies. Even though these discussions were neither part of a formal research inquiry nor comprised a representative sample group (i.e. only four African-American male instrumentalists), the concept of a podcast for Christian musicians, surprisingly, had universal appeal.

Consequently, the podcasts for this project were designed with touring Christian music artists in mind. The goal was to create a means of strengthening their faith, and to help them understand, embrace, and embody a robust workplace theology. To accomplish this, each message was developed with three things in mind: biblical soundness, the target audience of Christian music artists (in terms of relevance and topical interest), and brevity. As indicated previously, this was an amateur effort – no professional studio, equipment or personality (and some of this would be noticed and mentioned in the feedback). But great care was taken to write and record robust, five-minute messages, plus brief closing prayers, which would have significant spiritual impact on the music artists participating in this project.

The topic of the first podcast was *Workplace Theology for Music Artists*. The objectives of this message included introducing listeners to the terminology and notion of workplace theology, and planting spiritual seeds of thought relative to their biblical responsibility to become "salt" and "light" in their musical workplaces. The second podcast was entitled, "Improvisation". It highlighted improvisational creativity and freedom through the *jazz-life* and *jazz-faith* metaphors introduced in the writings of Wynton Marsalis and Robert Gelinas, respectively. The following are the transcriptions of the first two podcasts.

## **Podcast #1 – “Workplace Theology for Music Artists”**

*Welcome to Faith in the Key of Life.*

*This is a series of five-minute podcasts that are designed specifically to help Christian music artists integrate the claims of their faith with the demands their work life. My name is Rev. Gina Casey and I'll be your host for this series.*

*Today, we'll be discussing “Workplace Theology for Music Artists.”*

*Now, I'm sure you're already wondering, “What on earth is workplace theology?” Well, I'll tell you, understanding workplace theology begins with understanding this: If God is the God of everything, then your work matters to God. Work is the means by which we can love God, serve others, and fulfill our calling.*

*Believe it or not, work is a major topic in the Bible. God's first directive to Adam is found in Genesis 2:15 – “God took the man, and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and set it in order.” God's first directive to Adam was to work! He gave him responsibility for caring for the garden. God created people to work; not as a punishment, but as a way for us to relate to God himself.*

*So understanding what workplace theology is begins with understanding that your work is significant to God. So whether you play the oboe or sing in an opera, whether you blow the saxophone or play the xylophone, whether you are an audio engineer or a music teacher – your work matters to God.*

*God has given you the skills and the talent necessary to do the work you do. James 1:17 says that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights.”*

*So, understanding what workplace theology is, is understanding that your giftedness is an extension of the creative power of God. As a Christian, your giftedness is one of the ways that Jesus shows up in you.*

*And so, understanding what workplace theology is, is understanding that every place you work is a strategic place for serving the Lord. So, whether your workplace is the studio or the schoolroom as a music teacher, whether it's performing on stage or preparing in the shed – your workplace is where you show up for Jesus.*

*In Matthew 5, it says “you are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world.” Now you know that salt has an effect on everything it touches. But it actually has to touch the thing in order to have an effect on it. And so, as a believer, you and I are supposed to positively affect our workplaces. This is why it is a blessing that there are musicians that play, not only in church, but also in the secular work environment because you can't positively affect that workplace unless you're there. The music industry can't be touched unless people who are believers are there.*

*And so, as a believer you're not only supposed to be salt to that workplace, but you're also supposed to live your life in such a way that others are drawn to the light that's in you.*

*So, what does that really look like?*

*If you're going to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, first of all, you conduct yourself with integrity. And then you always treat others with respect and dignity. You exhibit a good work ethic – you show up on time, you be prepared. And then you're honest in all your dealings, and you're trustworthy in all your commitments. You live your life in such a way that, wherever you are, things are better because you're*

*there. And so, because you represent Christ, you be the cause of the upgrade, not the downgrade.*

*I'll end this podcast with this verse, "Whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*  
*Colossian 3:17.*

*Be blessed this week.*

*Let me pray for you.*

*Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for all the music artists that are listening to this podcast. I pray your blessings upon them, and I pray that you will instill in them the desire to represent you well in their workplaces. I pray that you'll protect them and keep them in all that they do. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*Take care and God bless!*

## **Podcast #2 – “Improvisation”**

*Welcome to Faith in the Key of Life.*

*This is a series of five-minute podcasts that are designed to specifically help music artists integrate the claims of their faith with the demands of their work life.*

*My name is Rev. Gina Casey and I'll be your host for this series. Today, our topic of discussion is “Improvisation”.*

*There are two books that I read as part of the bibliography for my dissertation that I found really interesting. The first one was by Wynton Marsalis and it was entitled, “Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life.” The second book written by the pastor of Colorado Community Church and self-described jazz theologian, Robert*

*Gelinas. It was entitled, “Finding the Groove: Composing a Jazz-Shaped Faith.” As you can probably tell by the titles, both books focus on presenting a connection between jazz and how we live.*

*Wynton Marsalis shows how jazz models “a way of viewing a life filled with possibilities, creativity and shared respect.” Pastor Gelinas presents jazz as a metaphor for living out one’s Christian faith.*

*Regardless of the reader’s musical preference, the jazz metaphor really resonates. The focus isn’t on the jazz sound, but the jazz style; not on appreciating the genre of jazz, per se, but appreciating the art form of performing jazz.*

*Both authors highlight improvisation as a keynote parallel between jazz performance and life. Wynton Marsalis writes that “jazz improvisation exemplifies life in the way that, each day, we encounter new sets of variables to negotiate.” He says that improvisation “demands that you invent something that will fill the requirements of the moment.” He also says that jazz improvisation is always done “with the mindset of working toward a common goal, both with others and for the benefit of others.”*

*Pastor Gelinas makes the connection between jazz and spiritual improvisation. He says that both have the characteristic of “respecting tradition while, at the same time, leaving one’s own mark.”*

*While I was contemplating on improvisation from the perspectives of these authors, I kept coming back to the idea of freedom. Freedom. It was St. Paul who said, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom,” 2 Corinthians 3:17. But freedom to do what?*

*I think it means freedom to be and become the “me” that was in the mind of God when I was conceived, and being formed and shaped in the womb. Like the psalmist says, when I was “fearfully and wonderfully made.” I believe it’s freedom to live my life according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, but freedom refuse to live my life as a carbon copy of someone else’s.*

*Let me give you an example. My father was a preacher. And when I accepted the call to preach, some people expected me to preach just like my dad. Now, I can imitate my dad’s style of preaching to a tee! But to do so on a regular basis, as part of my preaching style, would be inauthentic and limiting. What dad and I had in common was a firm biblical foundation. But I fully exercise my freedom to preach as God has uniquely gifted me to do so.*

*Where the Spirit of the Lord is in control of our lives, there is freedom for each of us to, as Marsalis puts it, “view a life filled with possibilities, creativity and shared respect.”*

*Pastor Gelinas sums it up well. He says, “Improvisation is about adventure, play and experimentation. It’s about being so familiar with one’s instrument of choice, the song, and the essentials, that we can trust ourselves to search for the unseen, for what the moment is presenting. When we incorporate improvisation into our faith, freedom follows – for jazz is all about freedom. Not freedom for freedom’s sake; rather, freedom within, and freedom that results from the good and right standards of our God. Improvisation will keep us from just copying others spiritually, and set us free to play a little.”*

*Let me pray for you.*

*God, our Creator, I thank you for the creativity with which you've gifted our listeners. I pray that what has been presented will bless them richly. As they improvise in music and in life, I pray that your Spirit would lead and guide them, protect and strengthen them. May you be glorified this day in all that they say and do. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

The evaluations of these two podcasts were used to improve upon the third and final podcast. Only two participants used the actual podcast evaluation form to document and submit their comments. All other feedback was captured outside that questionnaire. A few of the interviewees provided, not only their own personal comments, but also those of other music artists to whom they had forwarded the first two podcasts. Feedback was also informally requested from a group of trusted ministerial colleagues and Christian business and education professionals for evaluation on biblical soundness and overall presentation. In terms of feedback, the general comments between these response groups were nearly identical. This indicated that these podcasts would be relevant to and have an impact on a broader audience than just music artists. The following summary combines comments made on the first two podcasts, making distinctions between them only where necessary.

All responders agreed that the podcasts were good in terms of overall formatting and subject matter. "What a great tool for musicians of all genres!" "Clear thoughts and solid ideas." "Good explanation...on the necessity and purpose of work...good and easy to understand!" "Loved...the idea of improvisation as freedom and individuality while being mindful and respectful of others and of tradition in both daily life and in...music."

Several described the messenger as “warm,” “crisp and clear,” “good voice,” and “well-paced.” Most listeners said that five minutes seemed to be the perfect length for the messages. One person described this as using the “mini-skirt” method – “long enough to cover the subject and short enough to [capture interest and] get your point across.” Others made note of the presence of “strong theology” and appropriate scripture references, and commented positively on ending each message with prayer.

In terms of what was least liked about the podcasts, there were several comments on the quality of the recording. Too much reverb and echo made the podcast sound “a little bathroomy” and would be a distraction to most music artists. The lack of music to introduce and conclude the podcasts was also a negative to the listeners. Observations were made that I sounded “too scripted and not conversational,” sometimes “stumbled over words,” and “seemed nervous.” After listening to the first podcast on “Workplace Theology for Music Artists”, some stated that they still were unclear on the definition of workplace theology. There were several who “loved” the podcast on “Improvisation”, but a few found it difficult to follow and suggested that it be streamlined or divided into two messages. Three reviewers stated that the five-minute recording was too short, and two suggested that the podcast identifiers (i.e. named by topic or number or date) be more clearly defined.

In addition to the recommendations embedded in the comments above, two interviewees said that the podcasts “would be more accepted if [the target audience] knew [my] background in music.” Several evaluators requested a way for listeners to respond to each podcast, perhaps directing them to a website or blog site. “This would hopefully start a discussion between your followers/listeners and also provide you with a

good idea of ‘who’ your followers are.” There were several suggestions to “spur feedback from...listeners” by posing questions or “action items” at the end of each recording.

There also needs to be a statement at the end of the broadcast that provides contact information for music artists desiring pastoral support or counseling.

The final request of the evaluators was for them to provide a list of topics to be considered for future broadcasts. Some of their recommendations included:

- God’s purpose for music
- How I can use my talents to share my testimony
- Getting paid as a church musician
- The thin line between converting and conforming in gospel music – should gospel music emulate secular music in order to reach different audiences?
- How can musicians be in the world but not of the world? What does that really mean and what does it look like for touring musicians?

As previously stated, each evaluator articulated their belief in the value of providing this as an ongoing resource to spiritually edify Christian music artists. All in all, the feedback on the podcasts was very thoughtfully given and quite useful for making future recordings more robust, appealing and effective.

### **Pastoral Interviews**

A total of thirteen men and women of the cloth were interviewed for this project with the hopes that they would, ultimately, agree to provide pastoral care and counseling to Christian music artists on an as needed basis. This was a seasoned clergy group, averaging nineteen years in ministry, and currently stationed in the cities listed below.

Anchorage, AK	Birmingham, AL
Gilbert, AZ	Vallejo, CA
Denver, CO	Orlando, FL
Warrenton, GA	Chicago, IL
Boston, MA	Mitchellville, MD
Houston, TX	Portsmouth, VA

Creating a network of ministers from diverse locations around the country was important and intentional. First, musicians on tour may actually desire or find it convenient to actually meet with a pastor in person. Multiple states and cities increase the possibility of and opportunity for making that happen. Second, location familiarity may make those in need of spiritual support more inclined to connect to a particular minister. For instance, musicians from the south might feel more comfortable, or that they have more in common, with a pastor or chaplain from Alabama or Texas versus Colorado or Alaska. The same logic fed in to offering a diverse representation of denominational or non-denominational churches which might be appealing to Christian musicians who may have an affiliation or a preference. About two-thirds of the pastoral interviewees described their congregations as predominantly African-American, while the others were predominantly white or multicultural. Only one pastoral participant led a non-denominational church. The remaining were affiliated with the following denominations:

- African Methodist Episcopal (AME)
- African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion)
- Assemblies of God (AG)
- Baptist
- Evangelical Covenant Churches (ECC)
- United Church of Christ (UCC)

Contemporary Christian music was the prevalent genre in all the churches, followed by traditional gospel, hymns, and choral music. One pastor described his church as having a versatile music program with “an R&B vibe,” along with contemporary, and sometimes hip-hop and rap. Most of the ministers rated their music ministry as very good or outstanding. Only one expressed disappointment with the quality of music during worship service. All but one of the churches was staffed with at least a pianist or organist, and a drummer. Interestingly, the church with the most musicians (40) did not have the largest congregation. Pastors with an appreciation for a variety of music styles might seem more approachable to professional Christian musicians who have decided to perform secular music. With only one exception, 33-100 percent of the instrumentalists at these churches are currently or were previously secular music performers. This is important because it is also an indicator of vocational acceptance.

Only one senior pastor had an entirely volunteer band, but his worship pastors received a salary. The remaining interviewees stated that most or all of their musicians were paid. Since the primary grievance among musicians in this study is on the subject of compensation, it stands to reason that they would feel more comfortable with and willing to be open to pastors who have financially demonstrated respect and appreciation for their musicians’ gifts and talents.

The majority of pastors who had non-members on their music staff stated that they do provide pastoral care for them either personally or through ministerial staff members. This is significant because, in addition to much needed spiritual support, it can serve to strengthen the relationship between pastor and music staff. For those that were not providing pastoral care to musicians who were non-members, they all said that they

would definitely honor any requests to do so. (I took the opportunity to share the benefits of and challenge these pastors to consider being proactive about establishing more than an employer-employee relationship with all of their music staff, whether or not they are members or even believers.)

The question concerning the interviewee's experience counseling public figures was born out of a 2014 conversation in Seattle with former NFL player, Norm Evans, a founding member of Pro Athletes Fellowship – a Christian organization supporting professional athletes. We discussed the fact that both professional music artists and athletes face almost exactly the same challenges – an industry that exploits them and a culture of groupies, promiscuous sex, and drug and alcohol abuse. Norm believed that the elements of this dissertation project – providing spiritual support and care for Christian music artists – were a step in the right direction. Of particular interest to him was the development of a support network of pastors and ministers to which Christian musicians can be referred upon request. Based upon his experience with Pro Athletes Fellowship, he advised me to make sure the pastors being interviewed are able to handle the celebrity of professional music artists. If they have no experience with public figures and/or have a tendency to be enamored with celebrities, they may lose objectivity and compromise confidentiality. All but one of those interviewed had experience providing pastoral care to public figures. However, the one exception expressed confidence that objectivity would not be compromised if presented with the opportunity to counsel any notable persons.

Only one respondent declined to be a participant in this pastoral care referral network because of current workload and demands. All of the other interviewees

expressed their willingness to avail themselves to the musicians in this project without reservation. The pastor who had the largest congregation and staff among the interviewees also wholeheartedly agreed to participate, but stated that any counseling requests would be directed to an appropriate pastoral staff person based on the specified area of need (e.g., grief, marital problems, substance abuse, etc.). Any music artist requesting pastoral care would contact me to be connected with one of the ministers in this network. At the end of the project, nearly a third of the musicians had been successfully connected to one of our ministers.

The next chapter will present summary information for this project, as well as next steps for its continuance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MUSIC ARTIST

#### **Project Summary**

The thesis of this paper is that Christian music professionals making their living in the secular music ministry, in terms of discipleship and pastoral care, are a spiritually underserved demographic and, as a result, are vulnerable to the dangers and temptations typically faced by those who have made that career choice. Though perfectly positioned to “salt” and “light” the music industry, failure of the church to spiritually nurture and support its music artists runs the risk of weakening their Christian witness. The goal of this thesis-project was to develop resources to spiritually support and empower our music artists to live out the claims of their faith in their workplace. As a result, Christian music artists and clergypersons were recruited and interviewed, first of all to validate the thesis. Two resources were presented to our music participants: 1) podcasts of messages designed specifically for Christian music artists, and 2) access to pastoral support and counseling through a network comprised of our clergy participants. Details of the project, including research methodology, questionnaire forms, podcast transcripts, and data summaries are documented in chapter four.

#### **Observations**

Comments made by the music interviewees indicated that, even though they all had some positive church experiences to share, most are also carrying a lot of frustration and deep wounds from church. As a result, several of them were currently not members

of or unaffiliated with any church. When asked how they were getting spiritually fed, several said they were not and this was an area of need in their lives, while a few mentioned listening to online devotionals and YouTube sermons were helpful. But over half of these participants were not receiving any form of pastoral care.

Interestingly, most of the ministers interviewed stated that they are in the practice of providing spiritual support and pastoral care for their music staff. There were pastors who shared that they only did this for musicians who were members of their local church, and so there were opportunities to discuss the reasoning behind that.

The podcast messages were very well received. Future topics were recommended as part of the evaluation, and the participants have continued to offer suggestions via email and Facebook. The primary areas of improvement were needed on the quality of the recording and clarity on some of the illustrations. It was surprising that several participants forwarded the podcasts to their friends, some of whom also provided positive feedback.

Only one of the ministerial interviewees declined to participate in the national pastoral support network. As of this writing, almost a third of the musical artists have met or spoken with someone in this network. Although the conversations were confidential, the feedback was that their experiences were positive.

In summary, this project did validate the concern that there are many Christian musicians in need of pastoral support, discipleship, and, specifically, training on how to integrate their faith with the demands of their work life. It also confirmed that regular podcasts and access to a network of trusted and caring pastors may be a good place to start in developing resources outside the church that will support our musicians. More

research needs to be done with a much larger sample size to confirm the findings of this project.

## **Next Steps**

### **Podcasts and Website**

One thing we learned from the project is that the Christian music community is willing to receive thought-provoking Bible-based podcast messages. So this needs to continue, but improvements in quality will be necessary. Since the target audience is music artists, every echo, reverb, crackle, and pop will not only be heard, but will be very distracting. So, our goal is to generate podcasts that are professionally recorded, including intro and outro music, which was recommended by our project participants. Also based on their feedback, our initial objective will be to record and publish weekly broadcasts, with daily podcasts as our ultimate goal after we build our following. We will revisit the five-minute podcast after several months to determine if that is still an attractive and effective time length, and adjust if necessary. In terms of hosting, I will take on that responsibility for as long as I am effective. We will work to have interesting music and clergy guests join us on the podcasts at least monthly. The current name of the podcast series, “Faith in the Key of Life,” will be used unless a more attractive one is recommended. We will investigate creating an app for the podcasts, as well as making them accessible via iTunes subscription.

We will design a robust website designed for music artists with the following capabilities:

- link to our podcasts, current and previous

- listener feedback for response to podcasts and recommendations for future topics
- devotionals, articles, and/or blogs
- links to vetted resources
  - marriage and family counseling and therapy
  - substance abuse counseling and rehabilitation
  - medical, financial, and housing assistance programs
- posted church musician jobs
- prayer request submission
- praise reports and congratulatory remarks
- pastoral care referral request forms
- a webpage for spouses

We also want to be able to post inspiring testimonies from music artists that are professionally recorded and edited. Until then, we will provide links to some of the inspirational professional sports athletes' testimonies found on the Pro Athletes Outreach and Fellowship of Christian Athletes websites.

#### Pastor Care and Support

We will need to take a more formalized approach to the development and institution of a pastoral support or chaplaincy network for our musicians. We recommend it include the following.

1. A more involved recruiting and vetting process will be established, including criminal and sexual background checks, and multiple referrals.
2. A certification program will be developed and instituted.

3. Ongoing training through workshops and webinars need to be made available.

Once this national spiritual support referral program has been established and validated, we should consider expansion. We could begin with Protestant denominations and Catholic dioceses by requesting platforms at their district or regional meetings to present our program to their pastors and priests. At the very least, we would be able to impress upon them the need to provide spiritual care and discipleship for their own music staff. Perhaps some clergy may, later, express an interest in learning more about becoming part of our spiritual support network.

The idea of chaplains is one we should explore. In chapter three, we presented RYFO, a California-based ministry with a vision to share the love of Jesus with and provide spiritual support for local and touring musicians. One intriguing facet of their ministry is the provision of “road chaplains” to bands at their request, for free. It would be a great resource to develop and offer to our podcast audience. It would also provide an interesting, unique, spiritual support experience for those in our clergy network, particularly the younger ministers. We could, perhaps, explore a partnership with RYFO, or train under their leadership to learn how to develop chaplains to minister to bands.

We also presented in chapter three the chaplaincy program that is instituted during the Olympic Games. This could be the model for providing chaplains to minister to and pray for artists at music festivals and cruises. We could also consider creating and staffing “safe harbor” rooms, like the ones set up by MusiCares during the annual NAMM event, for musicians who are recovering from substance abuse.

## Colleges and Seminaries

Two of the participants in this study were college music students, who were selected to see if the resources they evaluated might be something that could be tailored for those preparing to become music professionals. If as students they can be disciplined and spiritually strengthened in their faith before becoming immersed in their vocation and in the music industry, then they may have a better chance of being victorious over the challenges and temptations they are sure to face as music professionals. Knowledge of the type of spiritual support and online resources we offer would encourage them and let them know they are not alone. The positive response from our student participants indicates that this is a path we need to explore.

So, research needs to extend to the music departments at Christian colleges. In consideration of their ages, school workload, and topics, what we offer may need to be modified to meet the special needs of this demographic. There may also be opportunities to partner with these colleges to develop support groups, as well as webinars and workshops that help them understand how their faith should inform their work, and help them to “salt” and “light” their workplaces.

There may also be an opportunity to extend this in the form of training to the seminaries. Developing a curriculum module, workshop, or seminar that teaches future pastors and chaplains about theology of work and pastoral care for Christian music artists would have enormous possibilities, particularly in creating an awareness of their needs that we presented in this paper.

## **Events**

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Coaches Time Out, and Pro Athletes Outreach are all ministries that we explored because their primary target groups are sports professionals who deal with similar vocation-related moral, financial, and relationship challenges as music artists. One thing these organizations have in common is the sponsorship of special events for their members and their spouses. We should use what they have done to develop comparable resources for our music artists. For instance, an annual three-day weekend conference on each coast could be created specifically for music artists and their spouses. It could be a time of renewal, held at beautiful, peaceful resorts, and the topics could range from relationships to faith. Similar events could be designed specifically for ministers who are part of the support referral network or road chaplaincy program. The opportunity for the attendees to receive counseling, and executive coaching, as well as participate in constructive competition and teambuilding would be inspiring and rejuvenating. Of course, at all these events, the discussion of music, faith, and work would be included, as well as the sharing of best practices.

## **Final Thoughts**

This project was born out of sincere love and concern for musicians. Suffice it to say, my family is full of musicians, including my husband and myself, our parents, our children, and extended families. I have seen what can happen to music artists who are not grounded in faith and lack a strong spiritual support system. As a former minister of music and senior pastor, I have also seen the role the church can play in discouraging and disenfranchising its music artists. So the opportunity to create resources that will meet

them where they spiritually need it most has been most gratifying. The fact that I have so many loved ones out there in the music industry, I am personally vested in seeing this project thoroughly developed and expanded. This is meaningful, useful work that will produce much fruit.

I truly believe that God has not just given me an idea, but an idea that will go someplace.

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MUSICIANS

**Salty Jazz - Workplace Theology for Music Artists**  
*"You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world"*

**Music Artist Interview Questions**

These interview questions are designed to aid in the development of resources that serve the spiritual needs of Christian music artists performing in the secular music industry, and to strengthen their workplace witness. Your responses will be instrumental in providing easy access to biblical teachings designed specifically for musicians and vocalists, as well as pastoral care and support, in order to help them more effectively honor God with their lives and gifts.

Gina Casey, a doctoral student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is conducting this study. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. This will be a telephone interview and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. By responding to these interview questions, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study **in accordance with the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Informed Consent Document reviewed and signed at the onset of the research process.**

1. *Briefly describe your musical journey.*
2. *Briefly describe your experience as a church music artist.*
  - a. *What positions have you held?*
  - b. *Were you paid for your services?*
  - c. *What kindness (or challenge) did you experience from the church's leadership and membership?*
  - d. *How did your pastor(s) respond to your decision to perform secular music for a living?*
3. *In your opinion, how can the church best serve its music artists?*
4. *As a music artist, what would be the value to you to have access to pastoral care and counseling?*
5. *What would be the value to you to have access to a podcast series designed specifically for music artists that provides short inspirational biblical teachings and devotionals?*
6. *Would you be willing to participate in evaluating three of these podcasts during the next week?*

Thank you so very much for taking the time to participate in this study!

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS

**Salty Jazz - Workplace Theology for Music Artists**  
*"You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world"*

**Pastor/Minister Interview Questions**

These interview questions are designed to inform the development of resources to serve the current spiritual needs and strengthen the workplace witness of Christian music artists that perform in the secular music industry. Your responses will be instrumental in creating access to pastoral care and ecclesiastical support in order to help them more effectively honor God with their lives and gifts.

Gina Casey, a doctoral student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is conducting this study. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. This will be a telephone interview and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. By responding to these interview questions, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

1. *How long have you been in pastoral ministry?*
2. *In what city is your current church?*
3. *Describe the music ministry of your current church.*
4. *How many of these musicians and/or music staff are paid?*
5. *How many of them are professionals in the secular music industry?*
6. *Describe the pastoral care you provide to your musicians/music staff.*
7. *What experience do you have pastoring or counseling persons who are in the public eye?*
8. *Would you be willing to have professional musicians referred to you who are in need of spiritual counseling?*

Thank you so very much for taking the time to participate in this study!

APPENDIX C  
PODCAST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

**Salty Jazz - Workplace Theology for Music Artists**  
*"You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world"*

**Evaluation Questionnaire for "Faith In The Key of Life" Podcast Series**

These podcast evaluation questions are designed to aid in the development of resources to serve the spiritual needs of Christian music artists that perform in the secular music industry, and strengthen their workplace witness. Your responses will be used to develop and improve short biblical teachings and devotionals for musicians and vocalists that will help them more effectively honor God with their lives and gifts.

Gina Casey, a doctoral student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is conducting this study. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. This evaluation should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete and returned via email to PastorCasey@mac.com. By responding to this podcast evaluation questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study **in accordance with the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Informed Consent Document reviewed and signed at the onset of the research process.**

*Keeping in mind that the target audience is music artists who self-identify as Christian, please answer the following questions.*

1. *Title of Podcast:*
2. *What did you like best about this podcast?*
3. *What did you like least about this podcast?*
4. *What recommendations do you have for improving this podcast?*
5. *What suggestions do you have for future podcast topics?*

Thank you so very much for taking the time to participate in this study!

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## VITA

Name: Gina R. Casey

Date & Place of Birth: 1957, Richmond, CA

Education:

Bachelor of Business Administration  
*Computer-Based Management Information Systems*  
Howard University, Washington, DC

Master of Science  
*Management Information Systems*  
American University, Washington, DC

Master of Theology  
*Theology and Biblical Studies*  
Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA

Doctor of Ministry  
*Workplace Theology, Ethics and Leadership*  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
Period of Study: August 2011-May 2016  
Expected Graduation: May 2016